

The Pillars of Islam Made Easy - II

Salâh

(Prayer)

& Its Essential Conditions

الصلوة وشروطها

Yahya M. A. Ondigo



الدار العالمية للكتاب الإسلامي



IN THE NAME OF

ALLAH

THE ALL-COMPASSIONATE, ALL-MERCIFUL



SALÂH
(PRAYER)
&
ITS ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS

- Title: *Salâh (Prayer) & Its Essential Conditions*
- Author: Yahya M. A. Ondigo
- English Edition 1 (2014)
- Layout Design: IIPH, Egypt Branch
- Cover Design: Manal Khalifa

The Pillars of Islam Made Easy – II

SALÂH
(PRAYER)
&
ITS ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS

الصلاة وشروطها

Yahya M. A. Ondigo

الدار العالمية للكتاب الإسلامي

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC PUBLISHING HOUSE

Copyright © 2014 International Islamic Publishing House
King Fahd National Library Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Ondigo, Yahya M. A.

Salâh (Prayer) & Its Essential Conditions. / Yahya M. A.
Ondigo. — Riyadh, 2014

304 pp ; 21 cm

ISBN Hardcover: 978-603-501-206-5

1- Prayer - Islam

I- Title

252.2 dc

Legal Deposit no. **1434/4249**

ISBN Hardcover: 978-603-501-206-5

All rights reserved for the Publisher. No part of this book may be produced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without written permission from the Publisher.

The scanning, uploading and distribution of this book via the Internet or via any other means without the written permission of the Publisher is illegal and punishable by law. Please purchase only authorized electronic editions, and do not participate in or encourage electronic piracy of copyrighted materials. Your support is appreciated.

International Islamic Publishing House (IIPH)
P.O. Box 55195 Riyadh 11534, Saudi Arabia
Tel: 966 11 4650818 / 4647213 — Fax: 966 11 4633489
E-mail: editorial@iiph.com — iiphsa@gmail.com
www.iiph.com | www.iiph.com.sa

Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Pronunciation and Transliteration Chart | 13 |
| Arabic honorific symbols used in this book | 17 |
| Hadith grade terms in this book | 17 |
| About the Word ‘ <i>Lord</i> ’ | 18 |
| When ‘jihad’ refers to fighting | 19 |
| Publisher’s Note | 23 |
| Acknowledgements | 24 |
| Foreword | 29 |
| Preface | 31 |
| Introduction | 35 |
| <u>Chapter One</u> | |
| The meaning of <i>ṣalâh</i> | 37 |
| <u>Chapter Two</u> | |
| The importance of <i>ṣalâh</i> | 41 |
| <i>Ṣalâh</i> : The pillar of Islam | 42 |
| <i>Ṣalâh</i> : The determinant of all good deeds | 43 |
| <i>Ṣalâh</i> : The first Sharia act to be legislated | 44 |
| <i>Ṣalâh</i> : A gift from the seventh heaven | 45 |

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>Ṣalâh</i> : A programming towards righteousness | 47 |
| <i>Ṣalâh</i> : A means of purifying oneself from sins | 48 |
| <i>Ṣalâh</i> : The surest way of thanking Allah | 50 |

Chapter Three

| | |
|--|----|
| Importance of congregational <i>ṣalâh</i> (<i>ṣalât ul-jamâ‘ah</i>) | 57 |
| Creating awareness and concern | 58 |
| Creating equality among Muslims | 59 |
| Fostering love and fellowship | 60 |
| Building unity and strength in the community | 61 |
| Training in obedience | 61 |
| A serious warning to those who abandon congregational prayers | 62 |

Chapter Four

| | |
|---|----|
| The significance of <i>ṣalâh</i> in shaping the lives of Muslims | 65 |
| Cleanliness | 65 |
| Means of seeking help and guidance | 66 |
| Punctuality | 69 |
| Character building | 70 |
| Self-control | 71 |
| Humility | 72 |
| God-consciousness | 72 |

Chapter Five

| | |
|--|----|
| The implications of abandoning <i>ṣalâh</i> | 75 |
| <i>Ṣalâh</i> differentiates a Muslim from a non-Muslim | 75 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Abandonment of <i>ṣalâh</i> may nullify a person's Islam | 77 |
|--|----|

Chapter Six

| | |
|---|----|
| The first condition: Accepting Islam..... | 79 |
|---|----|

| | |
|--|----|
| Becoming a Muslim is the foundation of the acceptance of good deeds | 79 |
|--|----|

| | |
|--|----|
| Without Islam, good deeds will have no value on the Day of Judgement..... | 81 |
|--|----|

| | |
|---|----|
| Belief in God is the driving force behind all righteous deeds..... | 82 |
|---|----|

Chapter Seven

| | |
|--|----|
| The second condition: Purity of intention..... | 83 |
|--|----|

| | |
|---|----|
| Purity of intention is a pre-condition for the validity of all deeds | 83 |
|---|----|

| | |
|--|----|
| Intentions are embedded in the heart | 85 |
|--|----|

| | |
|--|----|
| Purity of intention must be maintained from the beginning to the end..... | 86 |
|--|----|

Chapter Eight

| | |
|---|----|
| The third condition: Purification and cleanliness (<i>ṭahârah</i>) | 89 |
|---|----|

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| Meaning of <i>ṭahârah</i> | 89 |
|---------------------------------|----|

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Importance of <i>ṭahârah</i> | 89 |
|------------------------------------|----|

| | |
|--|----|
| Ablution (<i>wuḍoo'</i>) and its virtues | 91 |
|--|----|

| | |
|---------------------------|----|
| Meaning of ablution | 91 |
|---------------------------|----|

| | |
|--------------------------|----|
| Virtues of ablution..... | 92 |
|--------------------------|----|

| | |
|--|----|
| The essential conditions of ablution | 94 |
|--|----|

| | |
|---|----|
| Practical performance of ablution | 96 |
|---|----|

| | |
|--|-----|
| Step 1: Make your intention | 97 |
| Step 2: Say <i>bismillâh</i> | 98 |
| Step 3: Wash your hands | 99 |
| Step 4: Rinse your mouth..... | 99 |
| Step 5: Clean your nose..... | 100 |
| Step 6: Wash your entire face..... | 101 |
| Step 7: Wash your arms..... | 101 |
| Step 8: Pass wet hands over your head..... | 102 |
| Step 9: Wipe your earlobes..... | 103 |
| Step 10 a: Wash your right foot | 104 |
| Step 10 b: Wash your left foot..... | 104 |
| Invalidators of ablution..... | 106 |
| Wiping over the socks and its conditions | 107 |
| When does wiping over the socks cease? | 107 |
| <i>Tayammum</i> | 108 |
| The meaning of <i>tayammum</i> | 108 |
| When is <i>tayammum</i> allowed?..... | 109 |
| How to perform <i>tayammum</i> | 111 |
| <i>Ghusl</i> | 112 |
| The meaning of <i>ghusl</i> | 112 |
| Occasions that necessitate <i>ghusl</i> | 114 |
| How to perform <i>ghusl</i> | 114 |

Chapter Nine

| | |
|---|-----|
| The fourth condition: Covering the 'awrah | 117 |
| Nudity is a seduction of Satan..... | 118 |
| The required covering for men | 119 |
| The required covering for women..... | 121 |

Chapter Ten

| | |
|---|-----|
| The fifth condition: Arrival of the appointed time..... | 123 |
| The obligatory prayers are in accordance with the biological clock | 123 |
| Prayer times for the five daily, obligatory prayers..... | 127 |
| The dawn prayer (<i>ṣalât ul-fajr</i>)..... | 128 |
| The noon prayer (<i>ṣalât udh-dhuhr</i>)..... | 129 |
| The afternoon prayer (<i>ṣalât ul-‘aṣr</i>) | 129 |
| The evening prayer (<i>ṣalât ul-maghrib</i>) | 131 |
| The night prayer (<i>ṣalât ul-‘ishâ’</i>) | 132 |
| Making up a missed prayer | 134 |

Chapter Eleven

| | |
|--|-----|
| The sixth condition: Facing the Kaaba | 137 |
| Kaaba: The first sanctuary dedicated to Allah’s worship.... | 137 |
| The significance of facing the Kaaba during <i>ṣalâh</i> | 140 |
| How to determine the qibla (direction of the Kaaba)..... | 141 |

Chapter Twelve

| | |
|--|-----|
| The seventh condition: Humility and devotion (<i>al-khushoo’</i>) | 143 |
| The meaning of <i>khushoo’</i> | 144 |
| Negligence of <i>khushoo’</i> in <i>ṣalâh</i> | 148 |
| The virtues of <i>khushoo’</i> | 149 |
| How to develop and maintain <i>khushoo’</i> | 152 |

Chapter Thirteen

| | |
|---|-----|
| Pictorial description of the <i>ṣalâh</i> | 159 |
| The call to prayer (<i>adhân</i>) and its origin | 159 |
| The <i>adhân</i> , its virtues, and what to say after it..... | 161 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Step 1: Saying the opening <i>Allâhu akbar</i> | 162 |
| Step 2: Standing..... | 163 |
| Step 3: Bowing (<i>rukoo</i> ‘) | 171 |
| Step 4: Standing up after <i>rukoo</i> ‘ | 173 |
| Step 5: Prostrating (<i>sujood</i>) | 175 |
| Step 6: Sitting between two prostrations | 177 |
| Step 7: <i>Tashahhud</i> | 180 |
| Step 8: <i>Tasleem</i> | 184 |
| Pillars of <i>salâh</i> | 187 |

Chapter Fourteen

| | |
|---|-----|
| Other special congregational prayers | 189 |
| The Friday prayer (<i>ṣalât ul-Jumu‘ah</i>)..... | 189 |
| Description of the Friday prayer | 189 |
| The purpose and significance of the Friday prayer..... | 190 |
| The importance of the Friday gathering..... | 195 |
| Important Sharia etiquette of the Friday prayer | 196 |
| Responsibility and etiquette of the <i>khaṭeeb</i> | 197 |
| The Eid prayer (<i>ṣalât ul-‘eed</i>)..... | 200 |
| The meaning of the term ‘Eid’ | 200 |
| The Islamic ruling on the Eid prayer | 201 |
| The significance of Eid prayer for the Muslims | 205 |
| The rationale behind the Eid prayer | 207 |
| The etiquette of attending the Eid prayer | 207 |
| Description of the Eid prayer | 209 |
| The Ramadan night prayer (<i>ṣalât ut-tarâweeh</i>) | 210 |
| The prayer of fear (<i>ṣalât ul-khawf</i>) | 213 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| The prayer of a traveller (<i>ṣalât ul-musâfir</i>)..... | 215 |
| <i>Jam ' taqdeem</i> (combining two prayers at the time of the earlier prayer)..... | 218 |
| <i>Jam ' ta'akhir</i> (combining two prayers at the time of the later prayer)..... | 218 |
| The prayer for rain (<i>ṣalât ul-istisqâ '</i>)..... | 220 |
| The prayer during an eclipse (<i>ṣalât ul-kusoof</i> and <i>khusoof</i>)..... | 221 |
| The funeral prayer (<i>ṣalât ul-janâzah</i>) | 223 |
| The virtues of performing the funeral prayer | 225 |
| Where the funeral prayer is performed..... | 226 |
| How the funeral prayer is performed..... | 227 |

Chapter Fifteen

| | |
|---|-----|
| Voluntary (<i>sunnah</i>) prayers..... | 235 |
| The prayer for decision-making (<i>ṣalât ul-istikhârah</i>) | 236 |
| The prayer after midnight (<i>ṣalât ut-tahajjud</i>) | 238 |
| The prayer for a need (<i>ṣalât ul-ḥâjah</i>) | 244 |
| The forenoon prayer (<i>ṣalât ud-ḍuḥa '</i>) | 246 |
| The supererogatory prayers before and after the compulsory <i>ṣalâh</i> (<i>ṣalât ul-qabliyah wal-ba 'diyah</i>) | 248 |
| Greeting the mosque..... | 248 |
| The <i>witr</i> prayer: the final prayer of the night (<i>ṣalât ul-witr</i>) | 250 |

Chapter Sixteen

| | |
|--|-----|
| Frequently-asked questions (FAQs)..... | 253 |
| Summary and conclusion..... | 271 |

Appendix I:

| | |
|--|-----|
| Selected soorahs from the Qur'an | 273 |
|--|-----|

Appendix II:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Resources for women on the topics of purification and prayer | 281 |
| Websites | 281 |
| Books | 282 |

Appendix III:

| | |
|--|-----|
| Mandatory Prayers (<i>Ṣalâh</i>) | 283 |
| Bibliography | 285 |
| Glossary of Islamic Terms | 289 |
| Index | 299 |

Pronunciation and Transliteration Chart

| Arabic script | Pronunciation | Transliterated form |
|---------------|--|--|
| أ | short 'a', as in <i>cat</i> | a |
| آ — إ | longer 'a', as in <i>cab</i> (not as in <i>cake</i>) | â |
| ب | /b/ as in <i>bell</i> , <i>rubber</i> and <i>tab</i> | b |
| ت | /t/ as in <i>tap</i> , <i>mustard</i> and <i>sit</i> | t |
| ة | takes the sound of the preceding diacritical mark sometimes ending in h (when in pausal form): ah, ih or ooh; or atu(n), ati(n) or ata(n) when uninterrupted | h or t (when followed by another Arabic word) |
| ث | /th/ as in <i>thing</i> , <i>maths</i> and <i>wealth</i> | th |
| ج | /j/ as in <i>jam</i> , <i>ajar</i> and <i>age</i> | j |
| ح | a 'harsher' sound than the English initial /h/, and may occur medially and in word-final position as well | ḥ |

| Arabic script | Pronunciation | Trans-literated form |
|---------------|--|----------------------|
| خ | as in <i>Bach</i> (in German); may occur initially and medially as well | kh |
| د | /d/ as in <i>do</i> , <i>muddy</i> and <i>red</i> | d |
| ذ | as in <i>this</i> , <i>father</i> and <i>smooth</i> | dh |
| ر | /r/ as in <i>raw</i> , <i>arid</i> and <i>war</i> ; may also be a rolled 'r', as pronounced in Spanish | r |
| ز | /z/ as in <i>zoo</i> , <i>easy</i> and <i>gaze</i> | z |
| س | /s/ as in <i>so</i> , <i>messy</i> and <i>grass</i> | s |
| ش | as in <i>ship</i> , <i>ashes</i> and <i>rush</i> | sh |
| ص | no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /sw/ or /s/ farther back in the mouth | ṣ |
| ض | no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /d/ farther back in the mouth | ḍ |
| ط | no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /t/ farther back in the mouth | ṭ |
| ظ | no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing 'the' farther back in the mouth | <u>dh</u> |
| ع | no close equivalent in English: a guttural sound in the back of the throat | ‘ |

| Arabic script | Pronunciation | Transliterated form |
|---------------|---|-------------------------------|
| غ | no close equivalent in English, but may be closely approximated by pronouncing it like the French /r/ in 'rouge' | gh |
| ف | /f/ as in <i>fill</i> , <i>effort</i> and <i>muff</i> | f |
| ق | no close equivalent in English, but may be approximated by pronouncing it as /k/ farther back in the mouth | q |
| ك | /k/ as in <i>king</i> , <i>buckle</i> and <i>tack</i> | k |
| ل | /l/ as in <i>lap</i> , <i>halo</i> ; in the word Allah, it becomes velarized as in <i>ball</i> | l |
| م | /m/ as in <i>men</i> , <i>simple</i> and <i>ram</i> | m |
| ن | /n/ as in <i>net</i> , <i>ant</i> and <i>can</i> | n |
| ه — ه — ه | /h/ as in <i>hat</i> ; unlike /h/ in English, in Arabic /h/ is pronounced in medial and word-final positions as well | h |
| و | as in <i>wet</i> and <i>away</i> | w |
| و | long 'u', as in <i>boot</i> and <i>too</i> | oo |
| ي | as in <i>yard</i> and <i>mayo</i> | y |
| ي | long 'e', as in <i>eat</i> , <i>beef</i> and <i>see</i> | ee |
| ء | glottal stop: may be closely approximated by pronouncing it like 't' in the Cockney English pronunciation of <i>butter</i> : <i>bu'er</i> , or the stop sound in <i>uh-oh</i> ! | (omitted in initial position) |

Diphthongs

| Arabic script | Pronunciation | Trans-literated form |
|---------------|---|----------------------|
| أَوْ، وَ | long 'o', as in <i>owe</i> , <i>boat</i> and <i>go</i> | au, aw |
| أَيَّ، آيَ | long 'a', as in <i>aid</i> , <i>rain</i> and <i>say</i> | ay, ai, ei |

Diacritical marks (tashkeel)

| Name of mark | Pronunciation | Trans-literated form |
|--------------|--|----------------------|
| َ fathah | very short 'a' or schwa (unstressed vowel) | a |
| ِ kasrah | shorter version of ee or schwa (unstressed vowel) | i |
| ُ dammah | shorter version of oo | u |
| ّ shaddah | a doubled consonant is stressed in the word, and the length of the sound is also doubled | double letter |
| ْ sukoon | no vowel sound between consonants or at the end of a word | absence of vowel |

Arabic honorific symbols used in this book

(ﷻ): *Subḥânahu wa Ta'âlâ* — Glorified and Exalted is He

(ﷺ): *Ṣalla Allâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* — Blessings and peace
be upon him

(ﷺ): *'Alayhi as-salâm* — Peace be upon him

(ﷺ): *Raḍiya Allâhu 'anhu* — May Allah be pleased with him

(ﷺ): *Raḍiya Allâhu 'anhâ* — May Allah be pleased with her

Hadith grade terms in this book

Sound: *ṣaḥeeḥ*

Reliable: *ḥasan*

Weak: *ḍa'eef*

Odd: *ghareeb*

Authentic: includes sound, reliable, or any grade in between

Acceptable: *sakat 'anhu*; the grader of the hadith did not
comment on it, meaning that he found nothing
unacceptable in it

About the Word *Lord*

The word *lord* in English has several related meanings. The original meaning is ‘master’ or ‘ruler’, and in this sense it is often used to refer to human beings: ‘the lord of the mansion’ or ‘Lord So-and-So’ (in the United Kingdom, for example). The word *Lord* with a capital L is used in the lexicon of Islam to refer to the One and Only God — Allah. In Islam, there is no ambiguity about the meaning of this word. While it is true that one may occasionally use the word *lord* (whether capitalized or not) to refer to a human being, in Islamic discourse the reference of this term is always clear from the context. Whereas for Christians, Hindus and other polytheists, the word *Lord* with a capital L may refer to Allah, to Jesus or to some imagined deity, for Muslims, there can be no plurality of meaning. Allah alone is the Lord, and the Lord is Allah — not Jesus, not Rama, not any other being.

The Editor

When 'jihad' refers to fighting

Although jihad is often translated into English as 'holy war', it must be noted that war has never been described as 'holy' in any of Islam's primary texts or even early Islamic literature. Linguistically speaking, jihad is an Islamic term that applies to a broad spectrum of activities, ranging from daily striving to meet the day's challenges, to the striving against one's desires and self, to the struggle to provide for one's family. Its basic definition is 'the act of striving or struggling in the way of Allah'. Therefore, jihad is not limited to war; it includes struggling with one's soul, speech, body and wealth so that the message of Allah reaches all humans willing to receive it.

Islamic scholars have referred to different types of jihad, such as jihad against the self (to understand Islam, act upon it, call others to it and be patient with the difficulties of making this call), jihad against the Devil (repelling Satanic whispers, doubts and lusts), jihad against the tongue (controlling it, using it to enjoin what is good, forbid what is wrong, spread the correct teachings of Islam and answer false ideologies), jihad against aggression with the purpose of protecting Islam and the lives, honour and property of Muslims) and other types of jihad like jihad against the hypocrites, jihad against oppressors and jihad against mischief makers.

Jihad — in the context of fighting — has specific rules and conditions that need to be met before jihad is initiated. The first rule is that people are not to be fought because of what they believe, or to coerce them to accept Islam. The second rule is to ‘fight only those who fight you’ and never initiate unprovoked aggression (*Qur’an* 2: 190). That means that Muslims are only allowed to fight back, rather than initiating fighting; but ‘fighting back’ includes fighting against actual aggression as well as proactively addressing real threats of aggression. In both cases, Muslims are instructed to be prepared and ready to defend their nation before they actually engage in military conflict. There are additional conditions, but the above-mentioned conditions are vital for putting jihad in its broader meaning in the proper context.

Another condition of the sort of jihad which involves fighting is that it should take place only under an Islamic authority that ‘raises the banner’ for such jihad. It is not following the Sunnah at all for any individual or self-appointed group of Muslims to wage war on behalf of a nation. Instead, Muslims should be united under the single authority of an imam or khaleefah (caliph), except in the case where an individual needs to defend his own family and property, or to help his neighbour to do so. This is proved by the example of the early Muslims as well as texts in the *Qur’an* and the Sunnah:

«When there comes to them [the hypocrites] a matter related to [public] safety or fear, they spread it about; if only they had referred it to the Messenger and to such of them as are in authority, those among them who are able to think through the matter would have understood it.» (*Qur’an* 4: 83)

«Hudhayfah ibn Yaman asked the Prophet (*ṣalla Allâhu ‘alayhi wa sallam* — blessings and peace be upon him): What if (the Muslims) have no single leader (they are divided into disputing groups)? The Prophet (ﷺ) answered:

If they have no single leader or unified group, then leave all these disputing groups, even if you have to bite on a tree until your death.» [part of a longer hadith recorded by Bukhari]

There are other conditions for jihad. In general, the rules laid out for war in Islam should be upheld unless there is some legitimate need or strategy when fighting occurs that would necessitate going against those rules. A Muslim should not kill himself or herself (*Qur'an* 4: 29) nor kill another Muslim, except by accident (*Qur'an* 4: 92). Women, children, the elderly and other non-combatants should not be harmed. Land should not be destroyed, nor trees cut down. Corpses should not be mutilated. Islam should not be imposed upon non-believers. Rather, if combatant non-Muslims choose on their own to embrace Islam, even if only as a deceitful trick, it should be accepted by the Muslim leadership, and fighting should stop. Peace should be sought before lives are lost. Treaties and agreements should be upheld. Prisoners should be well-treated. Above all, justice must be done.

«Fight in the path [according to the rules set by Allah] of Allah only those who fight you, but do not commit aggression [transgress limits]. Allah does not love aggressors. ...And fight them until persecution is no more, and religion is [freely embraced] for [the individual's faith in] Allah. But if they desist, then let there be no aggression except against transgressors.»

(*Qur'an* 2: 190, 193)

«Allah does not forbid you from being good, kind, just, and fair to those who have not fought you because of religion nor driven you from your homeland. Allah loves those who are just. Allah forbids you from giving allegiance to those who have fought you because of religion and have driven you from your homeland, and those who supported your expulsion...»

(*Qur'an* 60: 8-9)

In addition, the Muslim nation is encouraged to maintain strong military capabilities to promote justice and to deter acts of war and aggression.

﴿And make ready for them [their potential aggression] all you can of power, including steeds of war, to deter the enemy of Allah and your enemy, and others besides, whom you may not know but whom Allah knows.﴾

(Qur'an 8: 60)

The Editor

Publisher's Note

All praise and thanks belong to Allah alone, the One, the Almighty, the All-Merciful. Blessings and peace be upon Prophet Muhammad, the last of His messengers and prophets, and upon his family, his Companions, and all those who follow in his footsteps until the end of time.

The formal prayer of a Muslim, *ṣalâh*, is one of the pillars of Islam; it is also the deed which will be taken to account first and foremost on the Day of Resurrection. Today, our mosques are filled with worshippers, yet the essence of prayer is missing in general.

The author has addressed an important issue in this book. He has detailed the seven essential conditions to be fulfilled by every individual in the process of offering his or her *ṣalâh*. It is hoped that it will prove to be a useful handbook for those who are learning to pray as well as for those who want to improve the quality of their prayer.

May Allah accept the efforts of all those who contributed to the production of this book, and may it be acceptable to Him, *âmeen*.

Muhammad Abdul Mohsin Al-Tuwaijri
Managing Director
International Islamic Publishing House
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

Acknowledgements

All praise and gratitude is for Allah (*subhânahu wa Ta'âlâ* — Glorified and Exalted is He). We praise Him, seek His help, and beseech His forgiveness. We seek refuge in Allah from the evil in our souls and from our sinful deeds. No one can misguide the one whom Allah leads to the straight path. Similarly, no one can guide the one whom He allows to go astray. We bear witness that there is no true God worthy of worship except Allah (ﷻ). We also bear witness that Muhammad (*ṣalla Allâhu 'alayhi wa sallam* — blessings and peace be upon him) is His servant and Messenger.

O you who believe! Fear Allah as He deserves and die not save as Muslims. O people! Fear your Lord, the One who created you from a single soul and created from it its mate and from the twin spread forth many men and women. Fear Allah from whom you demand your mutual rights and do not cut familial ties. Surely, Allah is ever an All-Watcher over you. O you who believe! Fear Allah and always speak a word straight to the truth. He will make good all your works and righteous deeds and will forgive your sins. Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ) has indeed achieved a great success.¹

¹ The author is quoting translated meanings of several well-known Qur'anic verses as well as some supplications and phrases from hadiths. (Editor)

Verily, the best speech is embodied in the Book of Allah (the glorious Qur'an). The best guidance has been given by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) through the Hadith² and the Sunnah.³ The innovations are the most evil, and every innovation is an error. (Muslim)⁴

First and foremost, I praise and thank Allah for guiding my family and me to Islam. Had it not been for His grace and mercy on us, we would not have been guided. Secondly, I praise and thank Him for giving me yet another opportunity as well as the ability to complete this small but important book on *ṣalâh* (formal prayers of the Muslims). I pray that He accepts this small, humble effort on behalf of my family and me, making our scales of good deeds heavy on the Last Day, and that He pardons any errors that may have occurred therein.

It is worth noting that in this compilation, the meanings in English of the Qur'anic verses are a combination of English translations by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan and Dr. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali, and Saheeh International. The English meanings of the quoted hadiths⁵ have been taken mainly from the Arabic-English translations available, with slight

² Hadith: the collected statements and actions of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that with the Qur'an form the basis of Islamic law.

³ Sunnah: the practice and collected sayings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that together with the Qur'an forms the basis of Islamic law.

⁴ All hadiths in this text have been checked and verified by IIPH's researchers. It is rare, but it does happen that a hadith is not verifiable within the timeframe of researching and editing the book. In that case, a decision is made by the editorial board whether or not to include the hadith. It is IIPH's policy not to include weak hadiths or fabricated (fake) hadiths in our publications. If a weak hadith is included in any text, it is usually because the author of the book discusses it as a weak hadith. (Editor)

⁵ hadith: a statement or action of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that was remembered and recorded by his Companions and followers.

alterations made here and there for the purpose of clarity in meaning and understanding.

Almost all the hadiths used in this compilation have been checked and cross-referenced, with the level of authenticity and the grade clearly stated. This is based on what the scholars of Hadith have said with respect to those particular hadiths, and the books of Hadith published in the market.

Space does not allow me to mention by name all those who have helped in one way or another in the completion and subsequent publication of this work. However, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude and thanks to all those who have contributed.

In particular, I am dearly grateful to my family for their constant support and encouragement, especially to my wife, Rahmah Zamu Zamu Kamuhanda, for proofreading the book and writing its preface. May Allah continue to shower her with His abundant blessings in this world and in the hereafter.

I am also greatly indebted and thankful to my colleague, Imam Shaaf'ee of the Windhoek Islamic Centre, for reviewing and editing the book on such short notice, for writing its foreword, and for making a tremendous contribution towards its completion. May Allah reward him and his family abundantly both in this world and the hereafter for a job well done.

I also sincerely thank my friend and Muslim brother, Lali, of Rundu, Namibia, for his suggestions as he proofread the book. May Allah reward him and his family and grant them all the good of this world and the hereafter. I also express my gratitude to my brother and friend, Sheikh Ali Ssekamate, imam of Windhoek Islamic Centre, and his family for their support and constant encouragement during the writing of this book. May Allah reward them abundantly both in this world and in the hereafter.

Last but not least, I acknowledge and thank the sincere and tireless efforts of a very special person, the one who has been designing the covers of all my works: Brother Mazza of Inkvolt Company in Nairobi, Kenya. May Allah shower him and his family, including his newborn son, with abundant mercy and blessings both in this world and the hereafter and accept all his efforts in the field of *da'wah*.⁶ Âmeen.

I beseech Allah to benefit all those who will have the opportunity to read through this book. It is my special request to them to supplicate for my family and me. May Allah grant us success in this world and in the hereafter and enable us to enter paradise by His boundless grace.

If anyone has any comments, corrections, or suggestions for this work, they are free to contact me through the publisher. May Allah forgive our sins and shortcomings and save us from the torment of the hellfire, for indeed Allah is the All-Hearing and accepting of our prayers and supplications and the All-Powerful over all affairs. Âmeen.

Yahya M. A. Ondigo

Windhoek Islamic Centre, Namibia

⁶ *da'wah*: disseminating the teachings of Islam and calling people to accept and embrace Islam.

Foreword

All praise is to Allah for having created us as human beings and for guiding us to Islam. I pray that He continues to guide us so that we die as Muslims. I also pray that Allah accepts my small contribution in reviewing this work. I wish to pay a special tribute to the author of this book, who has achieved greatly in the field of da'wah, where there are many players (callers to Islam). His works have and will continue to play a pivotal role in spearheading the field and work of da'wah, inshallah (God willing).

I recall that when he informed me about authoring this book, he mentioned that it was intended for new Muslims (reverts). However, to my surprise, it has turned out to be a book that targets not only reverts but the entire Muslim society.

In the form of this book, reverts have a piece of work written in very simple English; the Arabic terms have also been simplified to facilitate understanding. Those who are fairly well-acquainted with Islam can benefit from the supporting evidence cited for all the verdicts. Finally, for those who are well-versed in Islam, this work will offer them scholarly advice, as every verdict has been authenticated with hadiths and sound opinions of different scholars and imams.

Sincerely, from the bottom of my heart, I fall short of words to articulately describe this book. I myself have learnt some very important points from it pertaining to one of the five pillars of Islam: ṣalâh.

Most of the books on ṣalâh that I have read fall short of presenting this topic for reverts. However, in this piece of work the subject has been presented using both words and illustrations which will, inshallah, simplify the task for those teaching ṣalâh.

The author has striven to present guidelines pertaining to the ṣalâh to the Muslim Ummah (worldwide community of Muslims) in strict accordance with a hadith in which the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Pray as you have seen me pray.» (Bukhari)

In conclusion, I pray to Allah to reward the author, forgive his shortcomings, and bless this work so that it becomes one of the means and ways for him to enter paradise. I also wish to take this opportunity to ask Allah to reward others who have contributed in one way or another in making this task a success — notably his wife, who spent many cold nights alone in bed while the author was attending to this noble task. *Jazâki Allâhu khayr al-jazâ'i wa bârak Allâhu feekum* (May Allah reward you with the best of rewards and may Allah bless you).

Imam Shaaf'ee 'Abdul-'Aziz

Windhoek Islamic Centre, Namibia

Preface

All praises are for Allah (ﷻ), who sent His prophets and messengers with clear signs and guidance to bring people forth from the darkness of disbelief to the light of Islam and to guide them to the path of Allah: the Almighty, the Most Praiseworthy.

Blessings and peace be upon the best of all His prophets and messengers, the noblest of His callers: Muhammad (ﷺ), with whom Allah concluded the series of His worthy and noble prophets and messengers. Allah has made his lifestyle an example for every believer in all the affairs of life, whether minor or major. With him, Allah has concluded the series of divine laws. He has made his message the most complete and the most able to meet the needs of people, regardless of the eras in which they live.

May Allah send His blessings and peace upon the Rightly-Guided Caliphs and all the other noble Companions as well as his noble, pure family through whom He taught humankind how they should properly worship Allah (ﷻ), connect themselves with and communicate with Him, and be in constant contact with their Creator through ṣalâh.

May Allah be pleased with and abundantly reward all those who try their best to learn and practice their ṣalâh under any circumstances, and all those who attempt to perfect their level of devotion, humility, and concentration. Âmeen.

All praises are for Allah for enabling me go through this noble work. Having read through this simple but comprehensive book, I discovered that ṣalâh is more than just bowing and prostration; it is more than a physical ritual. It is a mental, spiritual, and emotional communion with Allah. Ṣalâh itself, if performed as taught by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), is capable of refining and purifying the soul and thus producing better and more reliable and righteous human beings.

I have realized that there is a need to continuously refresh ourselves with as many authentic teachings of Islam as possible, especially with regard to ṣalâh. This is in order to equip ourselves with enough beneficial information and knowledge; hence, the ṣalâh that we establish five times daily can act upon our souls and benefit us mentally, physically, morally, socially, and perhaps economically. I have learnt from the authentic hadiths that, when faced with difficult decisions with respect to business transactions, marriage proposals, or any other worldly affairs, we are advised to perform two units of ṣalâh and consult Allah for proper guidance and decisions.

Any reader from any part of the globe or any walk of life can directly benefit from this book if he or she reads it with keen interest. This is largely because of the simple and lucid language along with the detailed explanations provided by the author.

This book is a brief guide towards understanding, practicing, and performing ṣalâh. It consists of sixteen chapters, including a final chapter on frequently asked questions and an appendix that includes *Soorat* (Chapter) *al-Fâtîḥah* (the opening chapter in the Qur'an) and the last twelve short chapters of the noble Qur'an in Arabic, with their transliterations and short translations of the meanings in English.

The first chapter explains the true meaning of ṣalâh as the second most important pillar of Islam: a gift from Allah — Who is above the seven heavens — and a means of purification of sins.

The next three chapters discuss the significance and importance of establishing ṣalâh in the life of a Muslim. The rest of the chapters, excluding the frequently asked questions, detail the essential conditions of ṣalâh, together with a pictorial illustration and written explanation of ablution and a practical step-by-step guide to performing the ṣalâh. This includes the names and units of each prayer as taught and performed by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ); these in turn are in accordance with the way they were revealed to him from Allah through his archangel, Gabriel (‘*alayhi as-salâm* — peace be upon him).

After discussing the seven conditions of ṣalâh in detail, the author brings to the attention of the reader the various non-obligatory forms of ṣalâh (sunnah⁷ prayers). These particular sunnah prayers are not only recommended but are also performed in congregation as emphasized by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). This is because of the way they uplift the faith of a believer and purify his or her soul. These prayers include, among others:

1. *ṣalât ul-Jumu‘ah* (Friday prayer),
2. *ṣalât ul-‘Eed*, which comes twice a year,
3. *ṣalât ut-tarâweeh*, performed each year during the twenty-nine or thirty nights of the glorious month of Ramadan,
4. *ṣalât ul-janâzah* (funeral prayer),
5. *ṣalât ul-khawf* (fear prayer), and
6. *ṣalât ul-istisqâ’* (prayer for rain).

The author concludes the book by outlining and discussing other important optional prayers, such as *ṣalât ut-tahajjud* (vol-

⁷ sunnah: acts that are recommended but not mandatory.

untary prayer offered during the night before dawn; also known as *qiyâm ul-layl*), that may be performed individually or in congregation. Also discussed are *ṣalât ul-istikhârah* (the prayer for guidance), *ṣalât uḍ-ḍuhâ'* (the forenoon prayer), *ṣalât ul-hâjah* (the prayer for a need), and others which are also recommended and best performed individually, out of people's sight, due to the rewards that they carry.

Using this book, any readers who are not yet acquainted with reading Arabic (which is nevertheless very important) may easily train and learn by themselves to read and memorize twelve short soorahs plus Soorat al-Fâtiḥah, which must be recited in every unit of prayer.

Finally, the author has addressed some of the most frequently asked questions about ṣalâh to clear up any questions or doubts that may arise in the minds of the believers or those who are still learning their ṣalâh. Although it is beyond the scope of this primer to discuss all the questions and issues about ṣalâh, I am confident that this is nonetheless an excellent book about learning ṣalâh. I pray to Allah to shower the author with His abundant and endless blessings and to accept all his endeavours. I also pray for this book to be of great benefit to whomever comes across it, and to provide valuable information on ṣalâh to every true seeker of knowledge. Âmeen.

Rahmah Zamu Zamu Kamuhanda

Introduction

All praises, thanks, and gratitude are for Allah (ﷻ), Who guided not only me but all the members of my family to Islam and Who has continued to guide millions of people from all over the world to the truth.

May the peace, blessings, and mercy of Allah be upon our beloved last Prophet and Messenger, Muhammad ibn ‘Abdullâh (ﷺ), and his pure family, his noble Companions, and all those who follow their righteous way until the Last Day.

Many books, numbering perhaps in the thousands, have been written on ṣalâh, and many are still being written. One may wonder about or even question the rationale and need for another book on the same topic. The truth is that Allah has blessed different writers and authors with unique ways of presenting their research materials on the same subject. However, this is not the case in the writing of this book.

The main reason is as follows: I embraced Islam a few years ago and went through a lot of difficulty while learning how to perform ṣalâh. At the time, I was totally clueless about the Arabic language, in which the ṣalâh is essentially performed.

Considering my dilemma, I felt obligated to try to simplify the process of performing ṣalâh and reciting the Arabic therein as much as possible and teaching this method to others. I have attempted this through theory and practice, transliteration, and il-

lustrative photographs to help all those who are learning ṣalâh. Through this text, they should find it easy to master it as quickly as possible, since anyone joining Islam is required to start performing ṣalâh immediately.

Secondly, five years ago, I wrote a book titled *Shahâdah (Testimony of Faith) & Its Essential Conditions*, which I intended to be the first in a series on “The Pillars of Islam Made Easy”. It was well received and appreciated by many readers. This book, inshallah, is the second in the series.

I thank Allah, Who has guided and helped me in my challenging task and made it easy for me to accomplish the compilation of this small book on ṣalâh. I pray that He accepts it and benefits all those who will have the opportunity to read it, so that they may learn their ṣalâh with ease. Âmeen.

Chapter One

The meaning of ṣalâh

Ṣalâh is the second most important practical pillar of Islam and is among the greatest acts of worship it enjoins. The literal meaning of the word ‘ṣalâh’ is supplication and glorification. However, technically it means:

The worship and glorification of Allah by specific words, actions and movements in different postures, commencing with the words: Allahu Akbar (God is the greatest) and ending with the words: Assalamu Alaiyikum Wa Rahmatullaah (May the peace and the Mercy of Allah be with you); a specially ordered and regulated form which the Islamic religion has brought into being⁸ and which all Muslims follow as a light and guide.⁹

‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib (*raḍiya Allâhu ‘anhu* — may Allah be pleased with him) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

«The key to prayer is purification. Its sacredness (begins) with the *takbeer* (saying *Allâhu Akbar*, meaning ‘Allah is the Greatest’, to open the prayer), and its release is the *tasleem* (saying *Assalâmu alaykum wa raḥmatullâh*, meaning

⁸ As the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered when he said: «Pray as you have seen me pray.» (Bukhari)

⁹ Shaikh Muhammad Mahmud al-Sawwaf, *The Muslim Book of Prayer* (Sharjah: Printers & Stationers Industries, n.d.), 35.

‘Peace be upon you, and the blessings of Allah’, to end the prayer).» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

In his famous *Commentary on the Forty Hadith of Al-Nawawi*, Jamaal al-Din M. Zarabozo has defined the lexical meaning of ṣalâh as *du‘â* (supplication). He has asserted that ṣalâh is composed of many forms of supplications by which a worshipper turns to Allah and invokes Him for all his needs. Thereafter, he has quoted Muhammad Rasheed Riḍâ:

Ṣalâh is the showing of one’s need and dependence upon the worshipped one, by speech, action or both. This is what is meant by the statement: The meaning of ṣalâh is supplication, as one demonstrates his need for the great, the Noble, even if just in action, in order to bring about some need, continuation of some bounty or repelling of some harm or punishment... Prayer in the manner we have just mentioned [where one demonstrates his need and reliance upon his Lord] is demonstrated in Islam in the best way possible. This is the prayer that Allah has made obligatory upon the Muslims. These statements and actions, starting with the opening statement of: Allah is the greatest and ending with the salutations, in the way that the confirmed Sunnah has shown, is one of the best ways to express the feeling of need for the worshipped.¹⁰

Riḍâ additionally writes that ṣalâh displays the souls’ reverence and awe for the one they are worshipping, if they establish it and perform it in its proper manner.¹¹

¹⁰ Muhammad Rasheed Riḍâ, *Tafseer al-Qur’ân al-Ḥakeem* (Beirut: Dâr al-Fikr), 1:128-129, quoted in Jamaal al-Din M. Zarabozo, *Commentary on the Forty Hadith of Al-Nawawi* (Denver, CO: Al-Basheer Publications and Translations, 1999), 1:354.

¹¹ Riḍâ, *Tafseer al-Qur’ân*, 1:128-129, quoted in Zarabozo, *Commentary on the Forty Hadith*, 1:354.

Many Muslims nowadays consider ṣalâh to be a collection of meaningless rituals that are performed superficially with no positive behavioural changes reflected in their everyday lives. Ṣalâh has also been narrowed down to Arabic words, mumbled without any understanding of their meanings. For others, ṣalâh has become an automatic, customary habit that is performed mechanically and swiftly just to fulfil the Sharia requirement of establishing the five daily obligatory prayers.

There is little wonder then that even though one can see Muslims attending the prayers on a daily basis (especially the Friday congregational ṣalâh), the role of Islam as a way of life, a driving force for building civilizations, and a model in shaping nations is neither manifested nor felt anymore. Acts of worship have lost their true meaning. Prayers, sermons, and Qur'an and Sharia study circles have become ends in themselves rather than means towards producing better individuals, families, and societies.

The ṣalâh that is supposed to rekindle our faith, mould our character and behaviour, bring tranquillity and serenity to our hearts, and unite Muslims into one culture of faith is no longer bearing fruit. The crucial reason is that people have misunderstood the true meaning and spirit of ṣalâh.

Chapter Two

The importance of ṣalâh

The earliest translator of *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim* into English, the great Muslim scholar Abdul-Hamid Siddiqui, rightly states that prayer is the soul of religion and that there is no better way to purify the soul than through prayer. Prayer is the centrepiece of Islam and of religion in general. It is through prayer that human beings become conscious of their Lord and develop selfless love for humanity along with an inner sense of piety. Thus, a non-praying person is fittingly considered to be a soulless person. Prayer is, therefore, the first, the highest, and the most solemn phenomenon and manifestation of religion. The structure of the prayer and the way it is offered, including the words that are recited in it, explain in a nutshell the true nature of religion as an expression of human beings' contact with and gratitude to Allah (ﷻ).

Ṣalâh portrays the teachings of Islam in a nutshell. The very first thing that comes into prominence is that ṣalâh is accompanied by bodily movements. This implies that Islam lifts not only the soul to great spiritual heights but also illuminates the body of the human being with God-consciousness. It aims at purifying both the body and soul; it finds no cleavage between them. Islam does not regard the body and soul as two different entities opposed to each other. It does not see the body as the prison of the soul from which it yearns to secure freedom in order to soar to heavenly

heights. “The soul is an organ of the body which exploits it for physiological purposes, or body is an instrument of the soul”, and thus both need spiritual enlightenment.¹²

Ṣalâh: The pillar of Islam

Undoubtedly, ṣalâh is the most important devotional act of worship enjoined on all those who claim to believe in Allah (ﷻ). It is one of the five pillars of religion that Allah has prescribed for human beings. It represents the backbone of Islam; just as the removal of the spine would lead to the crumbling of a person’s body into a heap, leaving one unable to stand, the loss of ṣalâh would render an individual’s Islam as a meaningless jumble of rituals.¹³ It is for this reason that ṣalâh is a dividing line between Islam and disbelief. It is because of the exalted position of ṣalâh, as well as its supreme value and great importance to Allah and His Messenger (ﷺ), that we have been ordered to be mindful of it by strictly guarding it. Allah has emphasized:

﴿حَافِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَى وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ﴾

(سورة البقرة: ٢٣٨)

﴿Maintain with care the prayer especially the middle ṣalâh [‘aṣr]. And stand before Allah devoutly obedient.﴾ (Qur’an 2: 238)¹⁴

¹² Muhammad Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 117. Quoted in Abdul-Hamid Siddiqui, *English Translation of Sahih Muslim* (Beirut: Dar al-Arabia, 1972), 1:206.

¹³ Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, *Islamic Studies Book 2* (Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2005), 171.

¹⁴ The translations of the meanings of the verses of the Qur’an in this book have been taken (with some changes to the text) from Muhammad Muhsin Khan and Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali, *Interpretation of the=*

It was reported from ‘Abdullâh ibn as-Sunâbihi that he said:

«Abu Muhammad presumes that the *witr*¹⁵ is obligatory.

‘Ubâdah ibn aṣ-Ṣâmit responded: Abu Muhammad is mistaken. I testify that I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say:

Allah, the Exalted and Sublime, has made five prayers obligatory; whoever performs their *wuḍoo*’ (ablution) well, and prays them well at their proper times, and completes their *rukoo*’ (bowing) and their *khushoo*’ (humility and devotion), they have a promise from Allah that they will be forgiven. Whosoever does not do so has no promise from Allah. If He wishes, He will forgive them, and if He desires, He will punish them.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

Ṣalâh: The determinant of all good deeds

To stress the importance of ṣalâh, Allah has clarified that it will be the first act of worship to be taken into account on the Day of Recompense. The level of attention given to ṣalâh determines the performance of all the other acts of worship.

It was reported by Anas (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«The first thing for which a slave of Allah will be called to account on the Day of Resurrection will be ṣalâh. If it was

= *Meaning of the Noble Qur'an in the English Language* (Riyadh: Darus-salam, 1996); Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an* (Beltsville, MD: Amana Publications, 1993); and Saheeh International, *The Qur'an: Arabic Text with Corresponding English Meanings* (Jeddah: Abul-Qasim Publishing House, 1997).

¹⁵ *witr*: a single unit of supererogatory prayer performed after the evening (*ishâ*) prayer and before the dawn (*fajr*) prayer.

satisfactory, then the rest of his deeds will become good as well. If it was unsatisfactory, then the rest of his deeds will become bad as well.» (A sound hadith recorded by at-Ṭabarâni)¹⁶

It was narrated from Tameem ad-Dâri that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«The first thing for which a person will be brought to account on the Day of Resurrection will be his prayer. If it is complete, the voluntary (prayers) will also be recorded for him (as an increase). If it is not complete, Allah will say to His angels: Look and see whether you find any voluntary prayers for My slave, and take them to make up for what is lacking from his obligatory prayers. Then all his deeds will be reckoned in a similar manner.» (A sound hadith recorded by Ibn Mâjah)

As can be judged from the aforementioned hadiths, Allah has made prayer the way to success, prosperity, and happiness. He has avowed:

﴿قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ﴿٢﴾﴾ (سورة المؤمنون: ١-٢)

«Successful indeed are the believers, those who offer their ṣalâh with humility and full submissiveness.» (Qur'an 23: 1-2)

Ṣalâh: The first Sharia act to be legislated

Allah emphasized the importance of ṣalâh by making it the first Sharia¹⁷ act of worship that was made obligatory for the Muslims.

¹⁶ Quoted in Philips, *Islamic Studies Book 2*, 172.

¹⁷ Sharia: Islamic law derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

In fact, ṣalâh was the only Sharia act that was made obligatory on the Muslims while they were in Makkah, before they migrated to Madinah. Other Sharia acts of worship such as *zakâh* (compulsory alms), mandatory fasting, Hajj and jihad, as well as the punishment for adultery, marriage laws, trade laws, and so forth were all prescribed after the migration to Madinah.

Ṣalâh is also the first duty required after declaring one's belief in Allah (ﷻ): that is, after pronouncing the *shahâdah* (testimony of faith). Allah has described the significance of ṣalâh in the following verses.

﴿قُلْ لِعِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا يُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُنْفِقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً مِّن قَبْلِ أَن يَأْتِيَ يَوْمٌ لَا بَيْعَ فِيهِ وَلَا خِلَافٌ﴾
(سورة إبراهيم: ٣١)

﴿Say [O Muhammad] to My servants who have believed to establish prayer and spend from what We have provided them, secretly and publicly, before a day comes in which there will be no mutual bargaining, nor any friendships.﴾
(Qur'an 14: 31)

Ṣalâh: A gift from the seventh heaven

The importance of ṣalâh in Islam can also be judged by the fact that, unlike other devotional acts that were revealed to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) through Angel Gabriel (ﷺ) on this earth, Allah personally informed the Prophet (ﷺ) about the obligation of ṣalâh. This happened when he was taken on the night journey from the Sacred Mosque in Makkah to the Farthest Mosque, *al-Masjid al-Aqṣâ*, in Jerusalem. Then he was taken up in a special ascension, known as the *mi'râj*, above the seven heavens, where he directly conversed with Allah.

Allah has mentioned this special miraculous night journey of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ):

﴿سُبْحَنَ الَّذِي أَسْرَى بِعَبْدِهِ لَيْلًا مِّنَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ إِلَى الْمَسْجِدِ الْأَقْصَا الَّذِي بَارَكْنَا حَوْلَهُ لِنُرِيَهُ مِنْ آيَاتِنَا إِنَّهُ هُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْبَصِيرُ﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ١)

«Exalted¹⁸ is He who took His servant [Prophet Muhammad] by night from al-Masjid al-Harâm [in Makkah] to al-Masjid al-Aqşâ [in Jerusalem], whose surroundings We have blessed, to show him Our signs. Indeed, He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.»

(Qur'an 17: 1)

It was narrated from Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

«...Then (Allah) revealed what He revealed to me and enjoined fifty prayers on me every day and night. I came back down to Moses. He asked: What did your Lord enjoin upon your Ummah (nation)?

I replied: Fifty prayers.

He said: Go back to your Lord and ask Him to reduce it (the number of prayers each day and night), for your Ummah will not be able to do that. I tried and tested the Children of Israel (and found them too weak to bear it).

I went back to my Lord and requested: O my Lord, reduce it for my Ummah.

He reduced it by five.

I went back to Moses and said: It has been reduced by five.

He said: Your Ummah will not be able to do that. Go back to your Lord and ask Him to reduce it further.

I kept on going back and forth between my Lord and Moses until He said: O Muhammad, there are five prayers each day and night; for every prayer there will be a tenfold (reward), and thus, the reward for five prayers will be that of fifty prayers...» (Muslim)

¹⁸ Above any imperfection or failure to do as He wills.

Moreover, it should also be noted that other devotional acts of worship are obligatory only for certain categories of people or on particular occasions. For instance, zakâh and Hajj are only obligatory on those who possess a certain amount of wealth. Fasting is obligatory for only one month out of the whole year.

In contrast, ṣalâh is obligatory on every adult a minimum of five times per day throughout one's life. As long as a person has pronounced the shahâdah, one is obligated to establish ṣalâh throughout one's life. Whether one is rich or poor, healthy or sick, travelling or at home — no one is excused from this obligation; even in the battlefield a special form of ṣalâh has been prescribed.¹⁹ Thus, ṣalâh is a gift from Allah (ﷻ), Who is above the seven heavens, to every Muslim.

Ṣalâh: A programming towards righteousness

Another merit of ṣalâh can be seen from the fact that genuine prayers performed with humility and submission illuminate the heart, purify the soul, and teach the worshippers both the refinements of worship and their obligations to Allah, the Exalted and Almighty.

It is through ṣalâh that the glory and majesty of Allah is implanted in the heart (the place of righteousness). Ṣalâh endows and ennobles the human being with such excellent virtues of character as truthfulness, honesty, moderation, fairness, and generosity. It raises individuals and directs them to Allah by increasing their fear

¹⁹ The only allowed exceptions are menstruating women, women going through post-natal bleeding (for a maximum of forty days), and people who remain unconscious for more than three days (who are not required to make up for any ṣalâh missed during that state).

and awe of Him. In this way, one's moral standards are raised and one's soul is purified such that one sets aside lying, falsehood, evil, deception, anger, and pride. One thus rises above injustice, enmity, meanness, iniquity, and disobedience. Through this attitude, the following words of Almighty Allah are proven to be true:²⁰

﴿... وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ﴾
(سورة العنكبوت: ٤٥)

﴿...and establish regular prayer: for prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds; and remembrance of Allah is the greatest without doubt. And Allah knows the [deeds] that you do.﴾

(Qur'an 29: 45)

This is because every time the worshippers perform the ṣalâh, they recite verses from the Qur'an which either command them to do something or prohibit them from doing something. This constant recitation of various verses from the glorious Qur'an five times a day in the ṣalâh, which amounts to reciting Qur'an at least seventeen times per day, acts as programming towards righteousness in the long run. Thereby, ṣalâh trains one to lead a righteous, humble, and morally upright lifestyle. It also maintains one's good behaviour and character, as seen in the aforementioned verse.

Ṣalâh: A means of purifying oneself from sins

Without doubt, when one performs the five compulsory congregational prayers perfectly, correctly, and sincerely — knowing and understanding that one is uttering the words of glorification and praise while seeking Allah's forgiveness for one's shortcom-

²⁰ al-Sawwaf, *The Muslim Book of Prayer*, 15.

ings and sins — this becomes a guaranteed means of wiping away one's sins. Allah has prescribed:

﴿وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ طَرَفَيِ النَّهَارِ وَزُلْفًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ ذَلِكَ ذَكَرُوا لِلذَّكْرِ﴾
(سورة هود: ١١٤)

﴿And establish prayer at the two ends of the day and at the approach of the night. Indeed, good deeds do away with evil deeds. That is a reminder for those who are mindful.﴾ (Qur'an 11: 114)

Similarly, in a number of statements, the Prophet (ﷺ) indicated that the compulsory prayers, as well as other voluntary prayers performed with humility and attentiveness, are a definite means of wiping away one's sins. This is to the extent that when one concludes the ṣalâh, one is sinless.

Is-hâq ibn Sa'eed ibn 'Âmir ibn Sa'eed ibn al-'Âṣ narrated:

«My father told me that his father said: I was with 'Uthmân (رضي الله عنه) and he asked for water for purification. He said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say:

When the time for a prescribed prayer comes, if any Muslim performs ablution well and offers his prayers with humility and bowing, it will be an expiation for his past sins, as long as he has not committed a major sin. This applies for all times.» (Muslim)

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated: «I heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) say:

If there were a river at the door of any one of you, and he took a bath in it five times a day, would you notice any dirt on him?

They said: Not a trace of dirt would be left.

The Prophet (ﷺ) added: That is the example of the five (daily compulsory) prayers, with which Allah blots out evil deeds.» (Bukhari)

It was also narrated from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

«The (obligatory) five daily prayers from one Friday to the next are an expiation for whatever (of sins) comes in between, as long as one does not commit major sins.» (Muslim)

«Abu Dharr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) went out in the winter and the leaves were falling. He took hold of a branch of a tree, and the leaves began falling off. Then he said: O Abu Dharr.

I responded: At your service, O Messenger of Allah!

He said: Indeed, the Muslim servant prays the ṣalâh, seeking Allah's face by it, and his sins fall away just as the leaves are falling away from this tree.» (Recorded by Aḥmad with a reliable chain of narrators)

Ṣalâh: The surest way of thanking Allah

In its true form and spirit, ṣalâh is the worship of Allah with our bodies, minds, and hearts. It is thus a material and spiritual form of worship. The hearts and countenances of those who perform it will shine with divine light, and their souls will be uplifted, for it is the link between the slaves and their master. The performance of ṣalâh is one of the greatest tokens of faith and one of the most significant religious devotional acts for the glorification and remembrance of Allah (ﷻ). It is also the surest way of thanking Him for His boundless favours.

Allah blessed Prophet David and his family with all kinds of blessings and bounties. After He granted prophethood and kingship of great kingdoms to David and his son Solomon, Allah ordered them to act with thankfulness and gratitude. Allah has recounted:

﴿ وَلَقَدْ آتَيْنَا دَاوُدَ مِنَّا فَضْلًا ۚ يَجِبَالٌ أَوِيٍّ مَعَهُ ۖ وَالطَّيْرُ ۖ وَآلَنَّا لَهُ الْحَدِيدَ ﴿١٠﴾ أَنْ أَعْمَلَ سَبِغَاتٍ وَقَدَّرَ فِي السَّرْدِ ۖ وَأَعْمَلُوا صَلِحًا ۖ إِنِّي بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ بَصِيرٌ ﴿١١﴾ وَلِسَلَمُنَ الرِّيحَ غُدُوها شَهْرٌ وَرَوْاحُها شَهْرٌ ۖ وَأَسَلْنَا لَهُ عَيْنَ الْقَظِيرِ ۖ وَمَنْ الْجِنِّ مَنْ يَعْمَلُ بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِ ۖ وَمَنْ يَزِغْ مِنْهُمْ عَنْ أَمْرِنَا نُذِقْهُ مِنْ عَذَابِ السَّعِيرِ ﴿١٢﴾ يَعْمَلُونَ لَهُ مَا يَشَاءُ مِنْ مَحْرِبٍ وَتَمَثِيلٍ ۖ وَجِفَانٍ كَالْجَوَابِ وَقُدُورٍ رَاسِيَتٍ ۖ أَعْمَلُوا آلَ دَاوُدَ شُكْرًا ۖ وَقَلِيلٌ مِّنْ عِبَادِيَ الشَّاكِرُ ﴿١٣﴾ ﴾ (سورة سبأ: ١٠-١٣)

«And We certainly gave David bounty from Us. [We said:] O mountains, repeat praises with him, and the birds. We made pliable for him iron [commanding him]: Make full coats of mail and calculate the links, and work righteousness. Indeed I am, of what you do, All-Seeing. To Solomon [We subjected] the wind — its morning [journey was that of] a month and its afternoon [journey was that of] a month — and We made flow for him a spring of copper. Among the jinn²¹ were those who worked for him by the permission of his Lord. Whoever of them deviated from Our command — We will make him taste of the punishment of the blaze. They made for him what he willed of elevated chambers,²² statues,²³ bowls like reservoirs, and stationary kettles. Work, O family of David, in gratitude. Few of My servants are grateful.»

(Qur'an 34: 10-13)

²¹ Jinn: non-human, rational beings created by Allah from fire, often referred to as 'demons' or 'devils'; they have free will like humans: some are Muslims, others disbelievers.

²² Described by commentators as palaces, dwellings, or places of prayers.

²³ Which were not forbidden until the time of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

Consequently, the expression of Prophet (and King) David's gratitude to Allah was described by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) as being the most excellent of prayers.

‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Âṣ narrated: Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) told me:

«The most beloved prayer to Allah is the prayer of David, and the most beloved fasts to Allah are those of David. He used to sleep for half of the night, then pray for one third of the night, and again sleep for its sixth part. He used to fast on alternate days (that is, fast for half the year).» (Bukhari)

Prophet Abraham and his son Prophet Ishmael were always offering ṣalâh to thank Allah:

﴿وَاذْكُرْ فِي الْكِتَابِ إِسْمَاعِيلَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ صَادِقَ الْوَعْدِ وَكَانَ رَسُولًا نَبِيًّا ۖ وَكَانَ يَأْمُرُ أَهْلَهُ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَالزَّكَاةِ وَكَانَ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِ مَرْضِيًّا ۝﴾
(سورة مریم: ۵۴-۵۵)

﴿And mention in the book Ishmael. Indeed, he was true to his promise, and he was a messenger and a prophet. He used to enjoin on his people prayer and zakâh and was pleasing to his Lord.﴾

(Qur'an 19: 54-55)

Allah also ordered Prophet Moses (ﷺ) to establish this important act of worship as the greatest way of remembering and thanking Him.

﴿وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَىٰ مُوسَىٰ وَأَخِيهِ أَنْ تَبَوَّءَ لِقَوْمِكَ مِمَّا يَمْصُرُ يَتُونَآ وَاجْعَلُوا بُيُوتَكُمْ قِبْلَةً ۖ وَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ۝﴾
(سورة يونس: ۸۷)

﴿And We inspired Moses and his brother: Settle your people in Egypt in houses and make your houses [facing the] qibla²⁴ and es-

²⁴ Qibla: the direction that worshippers face in prayer. For the Muslims, it was changed from Jerusalem to the Kaaba (the House of Allah in Makkah).

establish prayer and give good tidings to the believers.﴾

(*Qur'an* 10: 87)

﴿إِنِّي أَنَا اللَّهُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا أَنَا فَاعْبُدْنِي وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِذِكْرِي﴾ (سورة طه: ١٤)

«Indeed, I am Allah. There is no deity except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance.﴾ (*Qur'an* 20: 14)

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) was most thankful to Allah for all the blessings that were bestowed on him, including the fact that Allah had forgiven all his past and future sins. To express his gratitude, he used to perform ṣalâh extensively, sometimes to the point that his legs would swell and crack, as reported in the following hadith in which al-Mugheerah ibn Shu‘bah (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) used to offer ṣalâh so much that his feet used to become swollen. When he was asked why he prayed so much, he would say: Shall I not be a thankful slave (to Allah)?» (Bukhari)

Al-Mugheerah ibn Shu‘bah also reported:

«Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) performed ṣalâh until his feet were swollen. It was said to him: You burden yourself like this while your past and future sins²⁵ have been forgiven?

He replied: Should I not be a grateful servant/slave (worker)?» (A sound hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)

Thus, to neglect ṣalâh is to be de-linked from Allah and to be deprived of His mercy, the abundance of his bounties, and the

²⁵ All prophets and messengers of Allah, including Muhammad (ﷺ), were protected from deliberate sins. What is understood from the phrase ‘your past and future sins’ is that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), as a human being, was bound to make some judgemental errors that did not suit his virtuousness and dignity; thus, they were interpreted as ‘sins’ whereas in reality they were not sins as committed by other human beings. (Author)

plenitude of His generosity. It is to refuse His kindness and blessings. True prayer is the remedy for all those ills which beset the heart and corrupt the soul. It is the light which dispels the darkness of evil and sins. It is the light and proof of deliverance on the Day of Judgement, without which one will be doomed to destruction in the hellfire.

«Hurayth ibn Qabeeṣah narrated:

I arrived in Madinah and said: O Allah! Make it possible for me to be in a righteous gathering.

I sat with Abu Hurayrah and said: Indeed, I asked Allah to provide me with a righteous gathering. Narrate a hadith to me which you have heard from Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) so that perhaps Allah would enable me to benefit from it.

He said: I heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) say:

Indeed the first deed by which a servant will be called to account on the Day of Resurrection is his ṣalâh. If it is complete, he will be successful and saved. However, if it is defective, he has failed and lost. If something is deficient in his obligatory (prayers), then the Lord, Mighty and Sublime, will say (to the angels): Look! Are there any voluntary (prayers) for my servant (worshipper)?

The deficiency in his obligatory (prayers) will be completed with them. Then the rest of his deeds will be treated like that.» (A sound hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)

Thus, on the Day of Judgement, the prayers of each one of us will be the measuring scale and touchstone for all the deeds of our lives. Our entire life in this world will be examined and determined based on this touchstone. If we were heedful and focused in our prayers such that we succeeded in them, we will secure suc-

cess, prosperity, and deliverance. Otherwise, we will face failure, disgrace, disappointment, and a great, irretrievable loss.

‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Umar related that one day, speaking about the prayer, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«For the one who observes it, it will become a light, a proof, and a means of deliverance on the Day of Judgement. For the one who does not observe it, there is no light, no proof, and no deliverance. On the Day of Judgement, he will be with Qâroon, Pharaoh, Hâmân, and Ubayy ibn Khalaf.»
(Recorded by Aḥmad with a sound chain of narrators)²⁶

This also confirms the words of Allah in the glorious Qur’an wherein He has described:

﴿كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينٌ ۖ وَإِلَّا أَصْحَابُ الْيَمِينِ ﴿٣٨﴾ فِي جَنَّاتٍ يَسَاءَلُونَ ﴿٣٩﴾ عَنِ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٤٠﴾ مَا سَلَكَكُمْ فِي سَقَرٍ ﴿٤١﴾ قَالُوا لَوْ نَكُنَّ مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ ﴿٤٢﴾ وَلَمْ نَكُنْ نَطْعُمُ الْمَسْكِينِ ﴿٤٣﴾ وَكُنَّا نَخُوضُ مَعَ الْخَائِضِينَ ﴿٤٤﴾ وَكُنَّا نَكْذِبُ يَوْمَ الدِّينِ ﴿٤٥﴾ حَتَّىٰ أَتَانَا الْيَقِينُ ﴿٤٦﴾ فَمَا نَفَعُهُمْ شَفَعَةُ الشَّفَاعِينَ ﴿٤٧﴾﴾
(سورة المدثر: ٣٨-٤٨)

«Every soul will be in pledge for its deeds. Except the companions of the right hand, [they will be] in gardens; they will question each other, and [ask] of the sinners: What led you into hellfire? They will say: We were not of those who prayed, nor were we of those who fed the indigent. Rather, we used to talk vanities with vain talkers; and we used to deny the Day of Judgement until there came to us [the hour] that is certain. Then will no intercession of intercessors profit them.»
(Qur'an 74: 38-48)

²⁶ Hâmân was an important vizier of the Pharaoh, while Qâroon was a rich man during the era of Prophet Moses. Ubayy ibn Khalaf was one of the staunchest enemies of the Prophet (ﷺ) and Islam. (Editor)

Chapter Three

Importance of congregational *ṣalâh* (*ṣalât ul-jamâ'ah*)

The five obligatory daily prayers, the Friday prayer, the two Eid prayers, and the tarâweeh prayer in the month of Ramadan are all meant to be performed in congregation and not individually.²⁷ The Prophet (ﷺ) repeatedly stressed the superiority of congregational *ṣalâh* over individual *ṣalâh*.

The only valid excuses for not performing congregational prayers are when there is too much rain or weather conditions are unfavourable, if a person is sick, or if one is afraid to go very early in the morning due to the danger of thieves and thugs. Apart from these, there is no valid excuse for not attending congregational prayers, especially considering the following hadith in which Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Allah will prepare for him who goes to the mosque (every) morning and in the afternoon (for the congregational *ṣalâh*) an honourable place in paradise with good hospital-

²⁷ This statement addresses men only. Although women are allowed to pray in congregation in the mosque, this is not obligatory for them, for the Prophet (ﷺ) said: «Do not prevent your women from going to the mosque, even though their houses are better for them.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood) (Editor)

ity for (what he has done) every morning and afternoon.»
(Bukhari)

Buraydah ibn al-Haseeb narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:
«Give glad tidings to those who walk to the mosque at night
that (they will be given) a perfect light on the Day of Judge-
ment.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allah’s Messenger
(ﷺ) said:

«Prayer in congregation is twenty-seven times superior in
degree to the prayer offered by a person alone.» (Bukhari)

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah
(ﷺ) said:

«The reward for the prayer offered by a person in congrega-
tion is twenty-five times greater than that offered in one’s
house or in the market. This is because if he performs ablution and does it perfectly and then proceeds to the mosque with the sole intention of praying, he is upgraded one degree in reward and one sin is removed from his accounts for every step he takes towards the mosque. When he offers his prayer, the angels keep on asking Allah’s blessings and Allah’s forgiveness for him as long as he is at his place of prayer. They say: O Allah! Bestow Your blessings upon him, be merciful and kind to him. One is regarded as being in a state of prayer as long as one is waiting for the prayer.»
(Bukhari)

Creating awareness and concern

Congregational prayers help develop an awareness of and concern for our fellow Muslims, which is very much encouraged in Islam.

An-Nu'mân ibn Basheer (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«The similitude of believers in regard to mutual love, affection, and fellowship is that of one body; when any limb of it aches, the whole body aches because of sleeplessness and fever.» (Muslim)

Congregational prayers bring us into daily contact with each other and thus make us aware of each other's conditions and circumstances. When we witness those brothers and sisters in Islam who are disabled or wearing tattered clothes, we are urged by our inner faith and conscience to come to their aid in whatever way we can. We know that if we help them, Allah will also come to our aid.

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: «Allah helps His servant as long as the servant helps his brother.» (Muslim)

Also, whenever any brothers or sisters are absent from the congregation, it concerns those who usually pray with them. Thereafter, they can visit them and find out why they were absent, whether they are hurt or have fallen sick. They can then supplicate for them or help out the family if they have passed away.²⁸

Creating equality among Muslims

During the congregational ṣalâh, we stand in rows, shoulder to shoulder, foot to foot, ensuring that no gap is left between us. No one is higher or lower than anyone else. Nobody feels polluted if a fellow worshipper's hand or foot touches him or her. We are all equally pure because we are all human beings originating from the same father, Adam (عليه السلام). All Muslims — irrespective of colour,

²⁸ Philips, *Islamic Studies Book 2*, 182.

race, or tribal affiliation — stand in prayer as equals. This very important sacred act of worship in congregation puts aside all ethnic and racial differences, confirming the following words of Allah:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۚ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿١٣﴾﴾
(سورة الحجرات: ١٣)

«O humankind! We created you from a single [pair] of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know each other. Verily, the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well-acquainted.»
(*Qur'an* 49: 13)

Fostering love and fellowship

Prayer in congregation is a means of fostering love and fellowship (brotherhood and sisterhood). The mosque is one place where Muslims from different social and economic backgrounds frequently meet for a common purpose. The rich and the poor, the noble and the common: all stand equal before Allah. Even the position of the imam is not the birthright of any special race or class; rather, it is a duty conferred upon the most knowledgeable individual from among the community. The congregational prayer is also a forum whereby Muslims from different backgrounds learn and discuss the problems facing each other and try to work on their solutions as brothers and sisters, confirming the following words of Allah:

﴿إِنَّمَا الْمُؤْمِنُونَ إِخْوَةٌ فَأَصْلِحُوا بَيْنَ أَخَوَيْكُمْ ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ ﴿١٠﴾﴾

(سورة الحجرات: ١٠)

﴿The believers are but a single brotherhood: so make peace and reconciliation between your two brothers; and fear Allah, that you may receive mercy.﴾
(Qur'an 49: 10)

Building unity and strength in the community

Performing prayer in a group, standing in rows, making the same movements, speaking similar words, and thinking about the same issues help develop unity of purpose in the minds of the believers. It produces spiritual unity, paving the way for unity and strength in the community in accordance with the following hadith:

Abu Moosâ (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said:

«A believer to another believer is like a building whose different parts enforce each other. The Prophet (ﷺ) then clasped his hands together with his fingers interlaced.»
(Bukhari)

Training in obedience

Through congregational prayer, we learn a great lesson pertaining to the concept of leadership and obedience to Muslim leaders. The relationship between the imam and the followers has been designed in such a way that it teaches us the modalities of obeying our leaders in accordance with the following command of Allah:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَأَطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ وَأُولِيَ الْأَمْرِ مِنْكُمْ فَإِن تَنَزَعْتُمْ فِي شَيْءٍ فَرُدُّوهُ إِلَى اللَّهِ وَالرَّسُولِ إِن كُنتُمْ تُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ ذَلِكَ خَيْرٌ وَأَحْسَنُ تَأْوِيلًا﴾

«O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those charged with authority among you. If you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger if you truly believe in Allah and the Last Day: that is best, and most suitable for final determination.» (Qur'an 4: 59)

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

«The imam is appointed only to be followed, so do not differ from him. When he recites the takbeer, you should also recite the takbeer. When he prostrates, you should also prostrate. When he rises up, you should also rise up. When he says: *Sami' Allâhu liman ḥamidah* (Allah listens to him who praises Him), you should say: *Allâhumma rabbanâ lak al-ḥamd* (O Allah, our Lord, for You is the praise). When he prays sitting, all of you should pray sitting.» (Muslim)

A serious warning to those who abandon congregational prayers

Because of the importance and qualities of congregational prayers with regard to the blessings therein, neglecting prayers in congregation is bordering on sin. That is why the Prophet (ﷺ) emphasized the seriousness of this negligence, not even allowing a blind man to miss the congregational prayers, when he said:

«No ṣalâh is heavier for the hypocrites than the *fajr* (dawn) and the *'ishâ'* (late evening) prayers. If they knew the reward for (praying) these prayers at their respective times, they would certainly come (to the mosques) even if they had to crawl.

The Prophet (ﷺ) added: Certainly I had intended to order the *mu'adh-dhin* (the one who makes the call to prayer) to

pronounce the *iqâmah* (call to stand for prayer) and order a man to lead the ṣalâh, and then take a flame to burn all those men (along with their houses) who had not yet left their homes for the ṣalâh (in the mosque).» (Bukhari and Muslim)

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah said:

«A blind man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: O Messenger of Allah, I do not have any guide to take me to the mosque. He asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) to grant him a concession to offer the prayers in his house, and he allowed him that.

When he turned to leave, he called him back and asked: Can you hear the call to prayer?

He replied: Yes.

He instructed: Then answer it (that is, come for prayers).» (Muslim)

Ubayy ibn Ka'b (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«One day, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) led the fajr prayer.

Then he asked: Is So-and-so present?

They replied: No.

He then inquired: Is So-and-so present?

They responded: No.

Then he said: These two prayers (fajr and 'ishâ') are the most burdensome for the hypocrites. If you only knew what blessings they contain, you would have definitely come to them even if you had to crawl. The first row is like that of angels, and if you knew the nature of its excellence, you would race to join it. A man's prayer performed along with another is purer than his prayer performed alone. His prayer with two people is purer than his prayer with one, but if

there are more, it is more pleasing to Allah, the Almighty, the Majestic.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

‘Uthmân ibn ‘Affân (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Whoever prays ‘ishâ’ in congregation, it is as if he has stood half the night (in prayer), and whoever prays ‘ishâ’ and fajr in congregation, it is as if he has stood the whole night (in prayer).» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

In view of all these beautiful statements of the Prophet (ﷺ), encouraging us to perform the obligatory prayers in congregation in the mosque, we are therefore obliged to make every necessary effort to perform our obligatory prayers in congregation as much as possible and also to encourage our family members and friends to do the same.²⁹

²⁹ Philips, *Islamic Studies Book 2*, 183.

Chapter Four

The significance of ṣalâh in shaping the lives of Muslims

Ṣalâh is one of the greatest devotional acts of worship; it increases Muslims' faith, purifies their souls, and brings them closer to Allah (ﷻ). The following fruits of ṣalâh describe the way it shapes the life of a Muslim:

Cleanliness

Ṣalâh helps a Muslim develop the habit of neatness and cleanliness. This is because one has to ensure that one's body and clothing, as well as the place of prayer, are free from all filth. Indeed, Allah loves those who are clean and pure, as He has confirmed in the glorious Qur'an:

﴿... إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٢٢)

﴿...Indeed, Allah loves those who are constantly repentant and loves those who purify themselves.﴾ (Qur'an 2: 222)

Means of seeking help and guidance

Ṣalâh is a more secure, soothing, pleasing, and comfortable refuge for the believer than a mother's lap is for her child. It is the greatest shelter and a haven of peace for the believer. It is a rope: a strong and unbreakable link between a person and Allah (ﷻ). One gains help, support, guidance, and an assurance of safety by holding onto it whenever one wants. This is in accordance with the following words of Allah:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ﴾ (١٥٣)

(سورة البقرة: ١٥٣)

«O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the patient.» (Qur'an 2: 153)

This is why when Prophet Abraham left his wife Hagar and his baby Ishmael in the wilderness and desert of Makkah, in accordance with Allah's command, the first thing he prayed for was ṣalâh. Allah has mentioned this incident, which occurred more than four thousand years ago, in the following verses:

﴿رَبَّنَا إِنِّي أَسْكَنْتُ مِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي بِوَادٍ غَيْرِ ذِي زَرْعٍ عِنْدَ بَيْتِكَ الْمُحَرَّمِ رَبَّنَا لِيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ فَاجْعَلْ أَفْئِدَةً مِنَ النَّاسِ تَهْوِي إِلَيْهِمْ وَارْزُقْهُمْ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَشْكُرُونَ﴾ (٣٧)

(سورة إبراهيم: ٣٧)

«Our Lord, I have settled some of my descendants in an uncultivated valley near Your Sacred House, our Lord, that they may establish prayer. So make hearts among the people incline toward them and provide for them from the fruits that they might be grateful.» (Qur'an 14: 37)

Similarly, whenever Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) had any pressing need or problem, he would automatically pray in order to seek Allah's help and support, asking Him for all his needs. The Prophet (ﷺ) would also put forth all his problems before Allah and invoke Him to answer his needs.

'Abdullâh ibn Awfâ' narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: Whoever has a need from Allah or from one of the sons of Adam, let him perform ablution, performing it well, then pray two *raka'ât* (units of prayer), then praise Allah and send ṣalâh upon the Prophet (ﷺ). Then let him say:

Lâ ilâha illâ Allâh al-Haleem al-Kareem. Subhân Allâhi rabbil-'arshil-'adheem. Alḥamdu lillâhi rabbil-'âlameen. As'aluka moojibâti rahmatika wa 'azâ'ima maghfiratika, wal-ghaneemata min kulli birrin, was-salâmata min kulli ithmin. Lâ tadâ' lee dhanban illâ ghafartahu, wa lâ hamman illâ farrajtahu, wa lâ ḥajatan hiya laka riḍan illâ qaḍaytahâ, yâ Arḥamar-Râḥimeen.

(None has the right to be worshipped in truth but Allah, the Forbearing, the Generous. Glorious is Allah, Lord of the magnificent throne. All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds. I ask You for what warrants Your mercy, and what will determine Your forgiveness, and the spoils (fruits) of every righteous deed, and safety from every sin. Do not leave a sin for me without forgiving it, or a worry without relieving it, or a need that pleases you without granting it. O Most Merciful of those who have mercy. (A weak hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi and Ibn Mâjah)

This particular hadith on ṣalât ul-ḥajjah has been declared weak. Nonetheless, we know that the Prophet (ﷺ) always taught and advised the Companions to resort to ṣalâh whenever they had a problem. He asked them to pray to Allah to fulfil their needs and problems. This only strengthens the concept of turning to Allah

with ṣalâh to solve all problems. Two other statements of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) further clarify this:

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Our Lord, the Blessed, the Superior, comes down every night to the nearest heaven to us, during the last third of the night, and says: Is there anyone to invoke Me, so that I may respond to (his) invocation? Is there anyone to ask Me, so that I may grant him his request? Is there anyone seeking My forgiveness, so that I may forgive him?» (Bukhari)

In a narration in *Jâmi' at-Tirmidhi*, the following words are also included):

«He (Allah) continues that until the illumination of fajr.» (A sound hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)

«It was narrated from 'Uthmân ibn Ḥunayf (رضي الله عنه) that a blind man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and requested: Pray to Allah to heal me.

He responded: If you wish to store your rewards for the hereafter, it is better. But if you wish, I will supplicate for you.

The man said: Make the supplication.

The Prophet (ﷺ) told him to perform ablution and do it well, pray two units, and say this supplication:

Allâhumma inni as 'aluka wa âtawajjahu ilayka bi-Nabiyyika Muḥammadin nabiyy ar-raḥmah. Yâ Muḥammadu inni âtawajjahu bika ilâ rabbee fee ḥâjati li taqdi. Allâhumma shaffi 'hu fiyâ.

(O Allah, I ask of You and I turn my face towards You by virtue of the intercession of Prophet Muhammad, the Prophet of mercy. O Muhammad, I have turned to my Lord by virtue

of your intercession³⁰ concerning this need of mine so that it may be met. O Allah, accept his intercession concerning me).» (A sound hadith recorded by Ibn Mâjah)

Punctuality

Congregational prayer is a constant training for punctuality and time management, since it must be performed five times daily at exact, appointed times. Thus, one has to learn to be punctual at every ṣalâh to avoid missing any of them. This is in accordance with the following words of Allah:

﴿... فَأَقِمْوْا الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَوْقُوتًا﴾ (١٣)

(سورة النساء: ١٠٣)

﴿...perform the prayer; verily the prayer is enjoined on the believers at fixed, appointed times.﴾ (Qur'an 4: 103)

This regular punctuality in congregational prayers has far-reaching effects on the life of a Muslim individual. It enables one to realize the importance of time and thereby do away with unnecessary tasks that constantly and continuously eat away one's valuable time.

‘Ubâdah ibn aṣ-Ṣâmit reported that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

³⁰ We also learn from this hadith that we can seek the closeness and help of Allah by invoking Him through Prophet Muhammad's intercession. This does not in any way mean that we pray through Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) as the Christians pray through Jesus Christ while supplicating. That would certainly be tantamount to associating partners with Allah, which is the greatest sin in Islam. We can also seek the closeness and help of Allah through the intercession of the righteous deeds that we performed with devotional sincerity to please Allah. This has been confirmed in an authentic hadith recorded by Bukhari and Muslim.

«After me, there will be leaders in charge of you who will be delayed by (various) matters in performing prayers at their proper times until their times have passed. So offer the prayer at its proper time.

A man asked: O Messenger of Allah! Should we pray with them?

He replied: Yes, if you wish.

Sufyân (one of the narrators) said that the man asked: Should I pray with them if I catch it with them?

He said: Yes, if you wish.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

Character building

Regular prayers make individuals conscious of the fact that Allah is constantly watching them wherever they are. Thus, the character of such individuals starts to be built along Islamic lines. Moreover, they program themselves five times a day with various verses of the Qur'an that command certain things and prohibit other things. This, in the long run, enables them to overcome their evil desires and directs them towards a strong character, in accordance with the following words of Allah:

﴿... وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ ۖ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ ۚ وَلَذِكْرُ

اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ ﴿٤٥﴾﴾

﴿...and establish regular prayer: for prayer restrains from shameful and unjust deeds; and remembrance of Allah is the greatest without doubt. And Allah knows the [deeds] that you do.﴾

(Qur'an 29: 45)

If prayer does not prevent individuals from evil and wicked deeds, they must carefully examine the quality of their ṣalâh to analyze what is wrong and how to correct it. It is likely that the individuals concerned are praying heedlessly, not understanding what they are doing in prayer. It is also possible that they are not concentrating on their prayer. In line with this introspection, the ṣalâh should be rectified and performed with humility and attentiveness so that it may be a means of prevention of sins, as reported in the following hadith:

It was narrated from Abu Umâmah that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

«Hold fast to *qiyâm ul-layl* (supererogatory night prayer, also known as tahajjud) for it was the practice of the righteous before you; it is a means of (gaining) nearness to your Lord, an expiation for bad deeds, and a means of prevention of sins.» (A reliable hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)

Self-control

Ṣalâh is meant to bring our desires under control. We are called to fajr prayer early in the morning while we are enjoying a sound sleep under a warm blanket with a soothing spouse. Who would not like to continue with slumber? Yet we cast the ego aside and head for prayer, even at times when it is unbearably cold. Thereby, we respond to the following call of Allah:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَجِيبُوا لِلَّهِ وَلِلرَّسُولِ إِذَا دَعَاكُمْ لِمَا يُحْيِيكُمْ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَحُولُ بَيْنَ الْمَرْءِ وَقَلْبِهِ وَأَنَّهُ إِلَيْهِ تُحْشَرُونَ﴾

(سورة الأنفال: ٢٤)

«O you who have believed, respond to Allah and to the Messenger when he calls you to that which gives you life. Know that Allah

intervenes between a man and his heart and that to Him you will be gathered. ﴿﴾ (Qur'an 8: 24)

Humility

Prayer makes the believers very humble and modest in everyday life. Those who establish regular prayers develop humility and modesty in their dealings with other people. Their constant communion with Allah in prayer gradually makes them conscious of their low, weak, and insignificant position before the All-Powerful and Almighty Lord (ﷻ).

﴿فَلْيَنْظُرِ الْإِنْسَانُ مِمَّ خُلِقَ ﴿٥﴾ خُلِقَ مِنْ مَّاءٍ دَافِقٍ ﴿٦﴾ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ بَيْنِ الصُّلْبِ وَالتَّرَائِبِ ﴿٧﴾﴾

(سورة الطارق: ٥-٨)

﴿إِنَّهُ عَلَى رَجْعِهِ لَقَادِرٌ ﴿٨﴾﴾

﴿Now let man but think from what he is created! He is created from a drop emitted, proceeding from between the backbone and the ribs; surely [Allah] is able to bring him back [to life].﴾

(Qur'an 86: 5-8)

God-consciousness

Ṣalâh is a constant reminder of Allah's favours upon His slaves. It makes them conscious of the presence of their Lord. Thus, they conduct themselves in accordance with the pleasure of Allah throughout the day.

When we get up in the morning, the fact that the first thing we do is perform ṣalâh reminds us of our obligation to fear Allah (ﷻ). It urges us to conform to Allah's commands in all our tasks throughout the day. The same goes on while we are busy during the day, until we go to bed.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ﴾

(سورة البقرة: ٢١)

«O you people! Worship your Lord, Who created you and those who came before you, that you may have the chance to learn righteousness.» (Qur'an 2: 21)

It was reported on the authority of Abu Dharr (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said to him:

«Fear Allah wherever you are. Follow up a bad deed with a good one that will wipe it out, and socialize with people who have good behaviour.» (A reliable hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)

Chapter Five

The implications of abandoning ṣalâh

Ṣalâh differentiates a Muslim from a non-Muslim

Ṣalâh, the most important devotional act of worship after the shahâdah, represents a clear division between a Muslim and a non-Muslim. It differentiates between those who are grateful to Allah and those who are not. Those who abandon their prayers will be punished, as Allah has warned in the glorious Qur'an:

﴿خَلَفَ مِنْ بَعدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ أَضَاعُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا الشَّهَوَاتِ فَسَوْفَ يَلْقَوْنَ غِيًّا﴾

(سورة مريم: ٥٩)



﴿Then there came after them successors who have given up ṣalâh and have followed lusts, so they will be thrown in hell.﴾

(Qur'an 19: 59)

Similarly, the Prophet (ﷺ) has explained to us in various hadiths the status of those who abandon their prayers:

It was narrated on the authority of Abu Zubayr that he heard Jâbir ibn ‘Abdullâh (رضي الله عنه) saying: I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) observing that:

«Between a man and polytheism and disbelief is the abandonment of ṣalâh.» (Muslim)

Jâbir (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Between disbelief and faith is abandoning the ṣalâh.» (A sound hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)

‘Abdullâh ibn Buraydah narrated from his father that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«The covenant (distinguishing) between us (Muslims) and them (unbelievers) is ṣalâh; whoever abandons it has committed disbelief.» (A sound hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)

Thus, anyone who pronounces the shahâdah but does not establish ṣalâh is like a farmer who plants a seed but does not water it; consequently, it dies without germinating or producing any fruit. Similarly, the testimony of faith uttered by these individuals may have brought them into Islam; however, since they abandoned ṣalâh, their faith also died out and hence, they reverted to disbelief.

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«By Him in Whose Hand my soul is, I was about to order the collection of firewood (fuel), then for someone to pronounce the *adhân* (call to prayer), and then for someone to lead the ṣalâh. Then I would go from behind and burn the houses of men who did not attend the (compulsory congregational) ṣalâh. By Him in Whose Hands my soul is, if any of them had known that he would get a bone covered with good meat, or two (small) pieces of meat present in between two ribs, he would have turned up for the ‘ishâ’ prayer.» (Bukhari)

Abandonment of ṣalâh may nullify a person's Islam

As per the aforementioned hadiths, not only is the total abandonment of ṣalâh a serious sin, it is also something that may nullify one's faith and throw one out of the fold of Islam. It is a serious affair that reflects one's hypocrisy. One is so negligent about his prayers that he does not perform them in congregation; rather, he prays them at any time that suits him. When he prays, he neither concentrates nor focuses on his prayers. Allah has strongly rebuked such behaviour in the following verses.

﴿فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ ﴿٤﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ ﴿٥﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ ﴿٦﴾ وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ ﴿٧﴾﴾
(سورة الماعون: ٤-٧)

«So woe to those performers of ṣalâh who delay their ṣalâh from their stated fixed times; those who do good deeds only to be seen but withhold from people small acts of kindness.»

(Qur'an 107: 4-7)

﴿إِنَّ الْمُنَافِقِينَ يُخَادِعُونَ اللَّهَ وَهُوَ خَادِعُهُمْ وَإِذَا قَامُوا إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ قَامُوا كَسَالَى ﴿١٤٢﴾ يُرَاءُونَ النَّاسَ وَلَا يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴿١٤٣﴾ مُدْبِذِينَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ لَا إِلَى هَؤُلَاءِ وَلَا إِلَى هَؤُلَاءِ وَمَنْ يُضْلِلِ اللَّهُ فَلَنْ يَجْدَ لَهُ سَبِيلًا ﴿١٤٤﴾﴾
(سورة النساء: ١٤٢-١٤٣)

«Indeed, the hypocrites deceive Allah, but He is deceiving them. When they stand for prayer, they stand lazily, showing the people and not remembering Allah except a little, wavering between this and that, neither to these [believers] nor to those [disbelievers]. Whoever Allah leaves astray — never will you find for him a way.»

(Qur'an 4: 142-143)

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«No ṣalâh is heavier (more burdensome) for the hypocrites than the fajr and the ‘ishâ’ prayers. If they knew the reward for (praying) these prayers at their respective times, they would certainly come (to the mosques) even if they had to crawl.

The Prophet (ﷺ) added: Certainly, I had intended to order the mu’adh-dhin to pronounce the iqâmah and to order a man to lead the ṣalâh, and then take a flame to burn all those men (along with their homes) who had not yet left their houses for the ṣalâh (in the mosque).» (Bukhari and Muslim)

The aforementioned verses from the noble Qur’an and the statements of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) indicate that those who neglect and abandon their ṣalâh imbibe other undesirable characteristics as well. They are not careful about feeding the poor, and they indulge in gossiping, backbiting, rumour-mongering, slandering, hypocrisy, and the like — all of which stem from the fact that they do not really believe in the Day of Reckoning. Therefore, they keep on denying the final judgement and the recompense therein and continue with their sinful nature. When the inevitable (death) comes upon them, it will be too late to repent and be forgiven.

What follows in the remaining chapters are the seven essential conditions that must be fulfilled before any ṣalâh can be valid and acceptable to Allah (ﷻ), hence attracting His blessings and rewards.

Chapter Six

The first condition: Accepting Islam

Becoming a Muslim is the foundation
of the acceptance of good deeds

This is not a condition that involves ṣalâh only. No act of worship — whether it is fasting, zakâh, or Hajj — will be accepted from individuals until and unless they accept Islam and declare that there is no true God worthy of worship except Allah and that Muhammad (ﷺ) is His last prophet and messenger. This declaration is known as the shahâdah,³¹ which is a statement of belief in God and is the key to enter into the fold of Islam. Allah has promised:

﴿وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَدْخُلُونَ الْجَنَّةَ وَلَا يُظْلَمُونَ نَقِيرًا﴾
(سورة النساء: ١٢٤)

﴿And whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer — those will enter paradise and will not be

³¹ This has been discussed comprehensively in Capt. (Rtd.) Yahya M. A. Ondigo, *Shahâdah (Testimony of Faith) & Its Essential Conditions* (Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2012).

wronged, [even as much as] the speck on a date seed.﴾

(*Qur'an* 4: 124)

Mu'âdh ibn Jabal (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«I accompanied the Prophet (ﷺ) on a journey. One day I was near him while we were moving. I said: O Messenger of Allah! Inform me of an action by which I will be admitted to paradise and which will keep me far from the fire.

He said: You have asked me about something great, but it is easy for whomever Allah makes it easy for. Worship Allah and do not associate any partners with Him, establish the ṣalâh, give the zakâh, fast during Ramadan, and perform Hajj to the House (the Kaaba). Then he said: Shall I not guide you to the doors of good? Fasting is a shield and charity extinguishes sins like water extinguishes fire, and (so does) the man's praying in the depths of the night. Then he recited:

﴿Their sides forsake their beds to call upon their Lord﴾ until he reached: ﴿What they used to do﴾³²

Then he asked: Shall I not inform you about the head of the entire matter and its pillar and its hump?

I replied: Of course, O Messenger of Allah!

He stated: The head of the matter is Islam, its pillar is the ṣalâh, and its hump is jihad.

Then he queried: Shall I not tell you what governs all that?

I answered: Of course, O Messenger of Allah!

He grabbed his tongue and said: Restrain this!

I asked: O Prophet of Allah, will we be taken to account for what we say?

³² (*Qur'an* 32: 16-17).

He replied: May your mother grieve your loss, O Mu'âdh! Are not people tossed into the fire upon their faces or upon their noses only because of what their tongues have wrought?» (A reliable hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)

Without Islam, good deeds will have no value on the Day of Judgement

Without true belief in Allah as the only true God worthy of worship, and in Muhammad (ﷺ) as His last prophet and messenger, the disbelievers' good deeds will be null and void. They are like a mirage in the desert or dust in the air, because these actions were neither based on any divine evidence nor done solely for Allah. Rather, they were done while associating partners with Allah. Allah has clarified:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَعْمَالُهُمْ كَرَابٍ يَاقِعَةٍ يَحْسَبُهُ الْظُّلُمَانُ مَاءً حَقًّا إِذَا جَاءَهُ لَمْ يَجِدْهُ شَيْئًا وَوَجَدَ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ فُوفَتْهُ حِسَابَهُ ۗ وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٣٩﴾﴾

(سورة النور: ٣٩)

﴿But those who disbelieved — their deeds are like a mirage in a lowland which a thirsty one thinks is water until, when he comes to it, he finds it is nothing — but [he] finds Allah before him. He will pay him in full his due, and Allah is swift in account.﴾

(Qur'an 24: 39)

﴿وَقَدْ مَنَّآ إِلَىٰ مَا عَمِلُوا مِنْ عَمَلٍ فَلَجَعْنَاهُ نَفِثًا مَّنْثُورًا ﴿٢٣﴾﴾ (سورة الفرقان: ٢٣)

﴿And We shall turn to whatever deeds they [the disbelievers] did, and We shall make such deeds as scattered floating particles of dust.﴾

(Qur'an 25: 23)

This first condition of complete submission to the will of Allah is the declaration that there is no true God worthy of worship except Him and that Muhammad (ﷺ) is His last prophet and messenger. This is also reflected in the mission of the Companion of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), Mu'âdh ibn Jabal, when he was sent to the people of Yemen.

It was narrated from Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) that Mu'âdh (رضي الله عنه) said: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent me and said:

«You are going to some People of the Book. Invite them to bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that I am the Messenger of Allah. If they accept that, then teach them what Allah has enjoined on them: five prayers to be offered each day and night. If they accept that, then teach them that Allah has enjoined zakâh on them, to be taken from their rich and given to their poor. If they accept that, then beware (of taking) the best of their wealth. Protect yourself from the supplication of the one who has been oppressed (wronged), for there is no barrier between it and Allah.» (Muslim)

Belief in God is the driving force behind all righteous deeds

True faith in our hearts is the driving force behind all sincere, righteous deeds. It is very unlikely for a person who has no faith to establish prayer or do any righteous deeds. If he and she does any righteous deeds, they will only be done for some intention other than to please Allah (ﷻ). Similarly, faith without righteous good deeds is not true faith; it may only be hypocritical lip service. Indeed, the fruit of true faith is the performance of good deeds. These deeds begin with the most important and easiest good deed: *salâh*.

Chapter Seven

The second condition: Purity of intention

Purity of intention is a pre-condition
for the validity of all deeds

Sincerity is not a prerequisite only for the acceptance of ṣalâh. Rather, like belief in Allah, it is a necessary condition for the acceptance of all righteous deeds. Those performing the ṣalâh must first purify their intention so that they are performing it solely to please Allah (ﷻ). The ṣalâh is not intended for any other person or reason, such as fortune or fame or to be seen by other people. Allah has described this condition in several passages in the glorious Qur'an:

﴿وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ حُنَفَاءَ وَيُقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُوا الزَّكَاةَ

(سورة البينة: ٥)

وَذَلِكَ دِينُ الْقَيِّمَةِ﴾

﴿And they were not commanded except to worship Allah, [being] sincere to Him in religion, inclining to truth, and to establish prayer and to give zakâh. And that is the correct religion.﴾

(Qur'an 98: 5)

﴿...مَنْ كَانَ يَرْجُوا لِقَاءَ رَبِّهِ فَلْيَعْمَلْ عَمَلًا صَالِحًا وَلَا يُشْرِكْ بِعِبَادَةِ رَبِّهِ أَحَدًا﴾ (١١)

(سورة الكهف: ١١٠)

﴿...So whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord, let him do deeds of righteousness and associate none as partner in the worship of his Lord.﴾ (Qur'an 18: 110)

It was reported on the authority of the Commander of the Faithful Abu Ḥaḥṣ 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb (رضي الله عنه) that he heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saying:

«Actions are only by intention, and every man shall only get what he intended. Thus, he whose migration was for Allah and His Messenger, his migration was for Allah and His Messenger; and he whose migration was to achieve some worldly benefit or to marry some woman, his migration was for that for which he migrated.» (Muslim)

Consequently, ṣalâh that is bereft of any sincere intention to please Allah and seek His rewards and pleasure will be rejected. It will be deprived of any blessings whatsoever.

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Allah, Blessed and Exalted is He, said: I am the least in need of a partner. Whoever does any deed in which they associate someone else with Me, I will abandon them along with the one whom they associate with Me.» (Muslim)

Such individuals will not be different from non-believers who did many good deeds without basing them on true faith in Allah (ﷻ). On the Day of Judgement, all their great deeds will be like a mirage or like particles of dust, scattered about with no value.

«When Allah assembles the first and the last on the Day of Resurrection, a day concerning which there is no doubt, a caller will cry out: Whoever used to associate anyone else

in an action that they did for Allah, let them seek their reward from someone other than Allah, for Allah is self-sufficient; He has no need of any associate.» (A reliable hadith recorded by Ibn Mâjah)

Intentions are embedded in the heart

Even before we begin our ṣalâh, we should ensure that our intention is solely to please Allah and to seek His pleasure and no one else's. Sincerity of intention is a firm conviction and resolution to perform ṣalâh or any other righteous deed only for the sake of pleasing Allah, bearing in mind that He is fully aware of all that is in our hearts. This sincerity of intention is not a verbal statement wherein we utter loudly that we are going to perform ṣalâh for Allah's sake. Rather, it is a strong emotion and conviction that we are actually going to perform a certain righteous deed only for Allah's sake and not to be heard of or seen by others (in order to impress them).

It was narrated from Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Whoever wants to be heard of, Allah will make him heard of; and whoever wants to be seen, Allah will display him (expose his lies).» (Muslim)

Voicing aloud one's intentions with respect to ṣalâh, as is done by some Muslims according to certain formulas, is not necessary. It is not confirmed whether or not the Prophet (ﷺ) or his Companions (رضي الله عنهم) practiced such audible expression of intentions with respect to ṣalâh.³³

³³ Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, *Islamic Studies Book 3* (Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2005), 150.

Purity of intention must be maintained from the beginning to the end

Normally, even when Satan — the greatest enemy of humanity — has been defeated in his attempts to corrupt human beings and lead them astray from the straight path of obedience into a state of ingratitude to Allah, he does not stop at that. He goes further and attacks the intentions behind their good deeds. He prods them to change their pure intentions in order to make them lose the blessings and the rewards expected.

Jundub narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«If one lets people hear of his good deeds intentionally to win their praise, Allah will let people know his real intention (on the Day of Resurrection). If one does good things in public to show off and win the praise of the people, Allah will disclose his real intention (and humiliate him).»
(Bukhari)

Hence, it is very important to take great care and ensure that all our righteous deeds begin purely for the sake of Allah and that our intention remains pure until we have concluded whatever we are doing. The saying of Allah's name (*bismillâh ir-Rahmân ir-Raḥeem* — in the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful) before beginning any important task is highly recommended in order to ensure this.

Furthermore, a series of informal prayers or supplications have also been prescribed by Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) to be recited before and after all natural habits. These include eating, drinking, sleeping, marital relations, and even entering and leaving the toilet. This is in order to turn these everyday habits into acts of worship and to develop in Muslims a keen awareness of Allah.

This ensures that our intentions remain pure throughout all our actions.³⁴

Abu Sa‘eed (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) came to them while they were discussing the *Dajjâl* (anti-Christ) and said:

«Shall I not inform you of that which I fear for you even more than the (danger of) Dajjâl?

We responded: Yes.

He explained: It is the hidden *shirk* (associating partners with Allah): when a man stands to pray and he beautifies his prayer because he sees another man looking at him.» (A reliable hadith recorded by Ibn Mâjah)

³⁴ Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, *The Fundamentals of Tawheed* (Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2006), 57.

Chapter Eight

The third condition: Purification and cleanliness (*ṭahârah*)

Meaning of *ṭahârah*

Ṭahârah literally means ‘purity and cleanliness’; technically, it is a state of purity and cleanliness that must be achieved before one can perform ṣalâh and other devotional acts of worship. Although the various rituals of *ṭahârah* make us physically clean, the main objective behind it is to enter a state of spiritual purity and cleanliness in order to worship Allah (ﷻ).

Therefore, cleanliness includes that of our bodies, our clothes, and the place of prayer, whereas purification refers specifically to the performance of ablution or *ghusl* (full ritual bath) or *tayammum* (dry ablution) prior to performing the ṣalâh.

Importance of *ṭahârah*

Ṭahârah is very important because without it, a person’s ṣalâh is null and void. It is one of the most important conditions for the acceptance of ṣalâh.

It was narrated by Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said:

«Ṣalâh is not accepted from the one who breaks his state of ṭahârah, until he performs ablution...» (Bukhari)

Some basic instructions with regard to ṭahârah are as follows:

1. The heart has to be purified from such unclean thoughts as doubt, polytheism, misgivings, deviation, hypocrisy, dissimulation, hatred, rancour, and envy. Allah has clarified that He sees everything we do and nothing is hidden from Him:

(سورة غافر: ١٩) ﴿يَعْلَمُ خَائِنَةَ الْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُورُ﴾

«Allah knows the fraud of the eyes and all that the breasts conceal.» (Qur'an 40: 19)

2. The body has to be purified and cleansed from all traces of filth, dirt, and defilement. After using the toilet, one must use toilet paper, clean water, or preferably both. One is then required to further attain a spiritual state of purity for performing the ṣalâh. This is done through ablution, ghusl, or tayammum, as will be discussed shortly. For men, this state of purity remains intact unless it is broken by one of the following seven factors: defecation, urination, breaking wind, eating camel's meat, deep sleep, ejaculation of semen, or sexual intercourse. In the case of women, in addition to the first five causes, other invalidators of the state of purity include menses, post-natal bleeding, and orgasm. The first five nullifiers of purity only necessitate ablution, but ghusl can also fulfil the requirement. The last two nullifiers necessitate ghusl; an ablution will not suffice. On the other hand, tayammum can take the place of either of the two in case there is no clean water. However, tayammum must be renewed before each obligatory prayer.³⁵

Allah has affirmed:

³⁵ Philips, *Islamic Studies Book 3*, 145.

﴿... إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٢٢)

«...Truly, Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves.» (Qur'an 2: 222)

3. Our garments must also be clear of any impurities or filth such as urine, faeces, blood, vomit, semen, and other bodily fluids. The Prophet (ﷺ):

«The key to prayer is purification. Its sacredness (begins) with the takbeer, and its release is the tasleem, which ends the prayer.» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

4. The place of performing ṣalâh should also be free of any filth and dirt as far as one can determine by seeing or smelling. It is not necessarily the case that an area on which people have walked is impure unless one can clearly see or smell any form of filth and dirt.

Ablution (wudoo') and its virtues

Meaning of ablution

Ablution is a state of spiritual, emotional, and mental purity that one must attain in order to perform ṣalâh. It means washing one's face, hands, arms, head, and feet with clean water as well as fulfilling other specific conditions of ablution. Allah has commanded the following regarding ablution:

﴿يَتَأْتِيَ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ ...﴾ (٦)

(سورة المائدة: ٦)

«O you who believe! When you prepare for prayer, wash your faces, and your hands to the elbows; rub your heads [with water]; and [wash] your feet to the ankles...» (Qur'an 5: 6)

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

«The prayer of none among you would be accepted in a state of impurity until you refresh your ablution.» (Muslim and Abu Dâwood)

Virtues of ablution

Ablution that is performed well according to the Sunnah of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) has a number of virtues as can be judged from the following hadiths:

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«When a bondsman — a Muslim or a believer — washes his face (during the course of ablution), every sin he had contemplated with his eyes will be washed away from his face along with water or with the last drop of water. When he washes his hands, every sin done by his hand will be effaced from his hands with the water or with the last drop of water. When he washes his feet, every sin towards which his feet have walked will be washed away with the water or with the last drop of water, with the result that he comes out pure from all sins.» (Muslim)

It was narrated that 'Uqbah ibn 'Âmir said:

«We were charged with taking care of the camels. When my turn came, I brought them back in the evening and found the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) standing up, addressing the people. I caught up with him when he was saying: There is no Muslim who performs ablution and does it well, then stands

and prays two units in which his heart is focused as he faces the qibla, but paradise will be due to him.

I said: How good is this!

Someone who was in front of me said: What came before it was even better.

I looked and saw that it was ‘Umar.

He said: I see that you have just come; then he said: For everyone among you who performs ablution and does it completely — or he said perfectly — then says: *Ash-hadu al lâ ilâha illâ Allâh, wa annâ Muḥammadan ‘abduhu wa rasooluh* (I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is His slave and messenger), the eight gates of paradise will be opened and he will enter through whichever one he likes.» (Muslim)

It was narrated that Ḥumrân, the freed slave of ‘Uthmân (رضي الله عنه), said:

«I heard ‘Uthmân ibn ‘Affân, while he was in the courtyard of the mosque and the mu’adh-dhin came to him at the time of the ‘aṣr (mid-afternoon) prayer. He (‘Uthmân) called for water and performed ablution and then said: By Allah, I am going to tell you a hadith which, if it were not for a verse in the Book of Allah, I would not have told you. I heard Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) say:

No Muslim performs ablution well then performs ṣalâh, but he will be forgiven for whatever (sins) come between that and the ṣalâh which follows it.» (Muslim)

«Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: Shall I not tell you something by means of which Allah erases the sins and raises people in status (in paradise)?

They (the Companions) replied: Yes, O Messenger of Allah!

He said: Performing ablution properly when it is difficult to do so, taking many steps to the mosque (coming even from afar), and waiting for the next ṣalâh after observing ṣalâh; that is similar to guarding the frontiers (and he repeated that).» (Muslim)

The essential conditions of ablution

Islam: Individuals must be in the fold of Islam before their ablution can be accepted. This is in accordance with the following verse of the glorious Qur'an wherein Allah has proclaimed:

﴿فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِنَ الصَّالِحَاتِ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَا كُفْرَانَ لِسَعْيِهِ وَإِنَّا لَهُ كَاشِبُونَ﴾
(سورة الأنبياء: ٩٤)

«So whoever does righteous deeds while he is a believer — no denial will there be for his effort,³⁶ and indeed We [Our angels], of it, are recorders.» (Qur'an 21: 94)

Sanity: Individuals must be mentally fit in order for their ablution to be accepted by Allah. Insane persons are not held responsible for what they do; therefore, they are neither rewarded for any acts of worship nor are they punished for any evil deeds until they regain sanity. This is also according to the following hadith:

It was narrated from 'Ā'ishah (*raḍiya Allāhu 'anhā* — may Allah be pleased with her) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

«The pen has been lifted from (recording the deeds of) three (individuals): the sleeping person until he awakens, the insane person until he comes to his senses, and the child until he grows up (to puberty).» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

³⁶ Such a person will not be deprived of his or her due reward.

Consciousness: Individuals must be conscious, neither asleep nor in a coma nor absentminded, for their ablution to be accepted. This is according to the following hadith:

It was narrated from ‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

«The pen has been lifted from (recording the deeds of) three (individuals): the sleeping person until he awakens, the insane person until he comes to his senses, and the child until he grows up (to puberty).» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

Intention: Individuals must make the intention that they want to perform ablution for the sake of Allah alone. This is because every deed will be judged according to the intention, and everyone will be rewarded accordingly as per the following hadith:

‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (رضي الله عنه) narrated: I heard Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) saying:

«The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended. So whoever emigrated for worldly benefits or to marry a woman, his emigration was for that for which he emigrated.» (Bukhari)

Purifying oneself from urine and excrement: Before ablution, it is required to purify oneself from urine, excrement, and all kinds of impurities using tissue, water, or preferably both. This is as per the following verse:

﴿... إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ التَّوَّابِينَ وَيُحِبُّ الْمُتَطَهِّرِينَ﴾ (سورة البقرة: ٢٢٢)

«... Truly, Allah loves those who turn unto Him in repentance and loves those who purify themselves.» (Qur’an 2: 222)

Using pure water: Another condition of ablution is using clean, pure, and lawful water. This is in accordance with the following hadith:

It was reported on the authority of Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«O people! Allah is Pure and Good and does not accept anything except what is pure and good. Allah has enjoined upon the believers what He enjoined upon the messengers...»
(Muslim)

Water should touch the skin: When performing ablution, one must ensure that water touches the skin and every part of the body that requires washing, according to the following hadith:

It was narrated that 'Abdullâh ibn 'Amr said:

«We were returning with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) from Makkah to Madinah. When we arrived at an oasis on the way, some people hastened at the time of 'aṣr prayer and hurriedly performed ablution. We came to them and their heels were visibly dry and had not been touched by water. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: Woe to (dry) heels from the fire! Make your ablution thorough.» (Muslim)

Those who are afflicted with ailments such as urine incontinence, frequent passing of wind, or — in the case of women — prolonged flow of blood due to illness, should always perform a fresh ablution before every ṣalâh. Their ablution is not nullified, even if any of the aforementioned things occur during their ṣalâh.

Practical performance of ablution

Ablution, with its essential and voluntary acts, must be performed according to the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), as explained in the following hadith:

‘Abd Khayr narrated:

«Once, ‘Ali came to us after he had prayed and asked for water for purification to be brought. We said (to ourselves): Why does he wish to purify himself after he has prayed? (It appears that) he only wishes to teach us.

He was given a basin and a container with water in it. He poured water from the container onto his right hand and washed his hands three times.

He rinsed his mouth and gargled and inhaled water into his nostrils and blew it out, using the same handful of water for both his mouth and nose (simultaneously) three times.

He washed his face three times. Thereafter, he washed his right arm three times, followed by his left arm three times.

He inserted his hand into the container and wiped his head once. After that, he washed his right foot three times and his left foot three times.

Finally, he said: If one is pleased to know the method of performing the ablution of the Messenger of Allah, this is how he did it.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

Based on the aforementioned hadith, the steps to perform ablution are:

Step 1: Make your intention

First and foremost, make the intention to perform ablution as an act of sincere worship for the pleasure of Allah. The intention need not be uttered aloud but should be kept in the heart while performing ablution. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«The reward of deeds depends upon the intentions, and every person will get the reward according to what he has intended...» (Bukhari)



Step 2: Say *bismillâh*

Invoke Allah at the start of ablution by saying *bismillâh* (in the name of Allah).

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«The ṣalâh of a person who does not perform ablution is not valid, and the ablution of a person who does not mention the name of Allah (in the beginning) is not valid.» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)



Step 3: Wash your hands

Wash your hands up to the wrists three times, rubbing them and allowing water to reach between the fingers.

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

«When any of you wakes up from sleep, he should not put his hand into any container until he has washed it three times. None of you knows where his hand was during the night or where it wandered.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)



Step 4: Rinse your mouth

Rinse your mouth with water — gargling with it and spitting out — three times, preferably after using a natural tooth stick, a toothbrush, or your fingers to clean the teeth and gums. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Were it not that I feared to make matters burdensome for my Ummah (nation), I would have ordered them to use the tooth stick before every prayer.» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)



Step 5: Clean your nose

Clean your nose three times by sniffing water in and blowing it out.

Abu Hurayrah narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: «When one of you performs ablution, let him put some water in his nose and then blow it out.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

Ibn 'Abbâs related that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Cleanse your nose well (after snuffing up water) two or three times.» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)



Step 6: Wash your entire face

Wash your entire face three times, using both hands. Start from the top of the forehead, down to the bottom of the chin, and from ear to ear.

‘Aṭṭā’ ibn Yasâr said that Ibn ‘Abbâs said to them:

«Would you like me to show you how Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) performed ablution? He called for a container of water and took a handful with his right hand. He rinsed his mouth and gargled. Then he inhaled water into his nostrils and blew it out; he did this three times. He took another two handfuls of water and washed his face...» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)



Step 7: Wash your arms

Wash right arm (including all of the elbow) three times, rubbing the arm while washing it. Repeat for the left arm. Allah has instructed:

﴿يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى الصَّلَاةِ فَاغْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ

(سورة المائدة: ٦)

إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ ... ﴿٦﴾

﴿O you who believe! When you prepare for prayer, wash your faces, and your forearms to the elbows...﴾ (Qur'an 5: 6)



Step 8: Pass wet hands over your head

Wet your hands if necessary, and wipe your head with wet hands. Start from above the forehead and move down to the back of the head. From there, bring your hands forward up to the forehead. (Do not wipe the back of your neck, as many people mistakenly do.)

«‘Abdullâh ibn Zayd narrated that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) wiped over his head with his hands, going over the front with them and then the rear. He began with the front of his head until they went to the nape of his neck. Then he brought them back again to the place where he had begun. Then he washed his feet.» (A sound hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)



Step 9: Wipe your earlobes

Without wetting the hands again, wipe your earlobes. Use your forefingers to wipe the inner part of your lobes and the thumbs for the outside part.

«It was narrated from Ibn ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) wiped his ears by putting his forefingers in them. He wiped the back of them with his thumbs. Thus, he wiped them both from the inside and outside.» (A sound hadith recorded by Ibn Mâjah)



Step 10a: Wash your right foot**Step 10b: Wash your left foot**

Wash both your feet up to the ankles three times, beginning with the right foot followed by the left. Both feet should be rubbed while they are being washed, and water should pass freely between the toes.

It was narrated that Mustawrid ibn Shaddâd said:

«I saw the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) perform ablution, and he ran his little finger between his toes.» (A sound hadith recorded by Ibn Mâjah)

While performing ablution, one sometimes leaves the parts between the fingers and toes dry. This happens because of one's haste while making ablution; thus, water fails to reach there as it should. Therefore, we must try our best to run our wet fingers between them or, as instructed in another hadith, we must ensure that water runs freely between our toes and fingers.

It was narrated that Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) said:

«The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: When you get up for prayer, perform ablution properly and make the water run between your toes and your fingers.» (A reliable hadith recorded by Ibn Mâjah)

It was narrated that Abu Ḥayyah said:

«I saw 'Ali performing ablution, and he washed his feet up to the ankles. Then he said: I wanted to show you how your Prophet (ﷺ) purified himself.» (A sound hadith recorded by Ibn Mâjah)

After the completion of ablution, it is highly recommended to supplicate to Allah according to the practice of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

'Umar ibn al-Khaţţâb (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

Whoever performs ablution well, and then says:

Ashhadu al lâ ilâha illâ Allâh, waḥdahu lâ shareeka lahu, wa ashhadu annâ Muḥammadan ‘abduhu wa rasooluh. Allâhumma ja‘alnee min at-tawwâbeena, waj‘alnee min al-muṭaṭṭahhireen

(I testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah alone; there are no partners with Him. And I testify that Muhammad is His servant and messenger. O Allah! Make me among the repentant and make me among those who purify themselves) —

the eight gates of paradise are opened for him; he may enter by whichever of them he wishes. (Recorded by at-Tirmidhi)³⁷

Invalidators of ablution

A person will remain in a state of purity until any of the following occurs:

1. Passing of excrement, urine, or wind. When one passes urine and/or excrement, it becomes mandatory to clean oneself before repeating the ablution. (People with problems such as permanent urine incontinence, frequent passing of wind, or women suffering from prolonged blood flow need to perform ablution once before every ṣalâh.)
2. Eating of camel meat
3. Falling into a sound sleep
4. Loss of consciousness from insanity, fainting, and the like
5. Touching sexual organs, intentionally and directly (skin-to-skin contact).

³⁷ Even though the scholars of Hadith have declared this hadith to be weak, the first part of the supplication has been collected in *Ṣaḥeeḥ Muslim*. Secondly, the additional supplication has been authenticated by the imam of Hadith, Muhammad Nâsir ad-Deen al-Albâni.

Wiping over the socks and its conditions

1. If one's ablution is nullified, then while performing a fresh ablution, it is allowed to wipe over the socks with wet hands instead of washing both the feet. This is strictly on the condition that the socks were put on after washing the feet in the first ablution.
2. Travellers may avail this privilege continuously for five consecutive prayers a day for three consecutive days and nights (seventy-two hours), while a resident may do so for only one day and one night continuously (twenty-four hours).
3. Wiping is done according to the traditions of the Prophet (ﷺ). Thus, after removing the shoes, wet hands are passed only over the upper surface of the socks (without wiping the bottom part, the sole).

«It was reported from 'Urwah ibn az-Zubayr, from al-Mugheerah ibn Shu'bah that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would wipe over leather socks. Another version adds: He wiped on the back (upper part) of the socks.» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

Khuzaymah ibn Thâbit reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: «The time limit for wiping over the socks for a traveller is three days (and three nights). For the resident, it is one day and one night.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

When does wiping over the socks cease?

The wiping privilege becomes invalid when:

1. The maximum time allowed expires
2. The socks are removed
3. Any of the cases requiring ghusl occurs

Tayammum

The meaning of *tayammum*

Tayammum is the act of using dry earth, sand, or stone in lieu of water. It is performed either when water is not available or when one is sick and cannot use water for purification. Allah has referred to tayammum as a special bounty from Himself so that the believers do not feel burdened and aggrieved when they are in a situation where there is no water and the obligation of ṣalâh still stands. Allah has attested:

﴿... وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُم مِّنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ لَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا بِوُجُوْهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ مِنْهُ مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنْ حَرَجٍ وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٦)

﴿...But if you are ill or on a journey, or one of you comes from the place of relieving himself, or you have come into contact with women, and do not find water, then perform tayammum. Allah does not does not want to place you in difficulty, but He wants to purify you and complete His favour upon you that you may be grateful.﴾ (Qur'an 5: 6)

It was narrated that 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said:

«We went out with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) on one of his journeys, and when we were in al-Bayḍâ' — or in Dhât al-Jaysh — a necklace of mine broke (and fell off).

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) started looking for it and the people did likewise. There were no water sources nearby and they did not have any water with them.

The people came to Abu Bakr (the father of ‘Â’ishah) and said: Do you see what ‘Â’ishah has done? She has delayed the Messenger of Allah and the people with him. They are not near any water source and they do not have any water with them.

Abu Bakr came, and the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was resting his head on my thigh and had gone to sleep. He said: You have delayed the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and the people. They are not near any water source and they do not have any water with them.

Abu Bakr scolded me and said whatever Allah willed he should say. He started poking me in the side with his hand and nothing prevented me from moving except the fact that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) was resting on my thigh.

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) slept until morning came, and there was no water. Then Allah revealed the verse of *tayammum*, so they performed *tayammum*.

Usayd ibn Hudhayr — who was of the leaders — said: This is not the first of your blessings, O family of Abu Bakr!

‘Â’ishah said: We made the camel that I had been riding get up, and we found the necklace underneath it.

In another narration of same hadith, Usayd ibn Hudhayr said: May Allah reward you with good (O ‘Â’ishah), for by Allah, you never have any problem but Allah grants you a way out and makes it a blessing for the Muslims.» (Muslim)

When is tayammum allowed?

Tayammum becomes necessary when:

- there is no clean water for performing ablution
- the water is so cold that it can affect a person’s health
- a person is sick and cannot touch water

- someone has a wound that will be harmed if water touches it
- one is travelling and water is not available
- it is too dangerous to fetch water from a nearby source
- water is available but will not be fetched in time for prayer
- the only water available is needed for drinking, and if that water is used for ablutions or ghusl, there will not be enough drinking water. Imam Aḥmad (may Allah have mercy on him) said, "Many of the Companions performed tayammum to save their water for drinking."

It was reported from 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Jubayr that 'Amr ibn al-ʿÂṣ (رضي الله عنه) said:

«I had a wet dream on a cold night during the battle of Dhat as-Salâsil. I felt that performing ghusl might kill me, so I performed tayammum and led the fajr prayer.

They mentioned this to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), who said: O 'Amr! You led the prayer while you were sexually defiled? I informed him of the reason that I did not perform ghusl and said: I heard Allah (in the Qur'an):

﴿... وَلَا تَقْتُلُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَانَ بِكُمْ رَحِيمًا﴾ (سورة النساء: ٢٩)

«...And do not kill yourselves; verily Allah is Ever-Merciful to you.» (Qur'an 4: 29)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) laughed and did not say anything.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

'Abdullâh ibn 'Abbâs said:

«A person was wounded during the time of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). He then had a wet dream. He was commanded to perform ghusl, and (because of it) he died. This news reached the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), who said: They killed

him; may Allah kill them! Is not inquiry the cure of ignorance?» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

How to perform *tayammum*

After the revelation of the verses regarding *tayammum*, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) taught his Companions the correct method of performing *tayammum*.

«Shaqeeq narrated: I was sitting with ‘Abdullâh and Abu Moosâ when Abu Moosâ said: O Abu ‘Abdur-Rahmân! If a man becomes sexually impure and cannot find water (to perform ghusl) for a month, what do you think he should do about offering *ṣalâh*?

‘Abdullâh said: He should not perform *tayammum* even if he does not find water for a month.

Abu Moosâ asked: What about this verse in Soorat *al-Mâ'idah*:

(سورة المائدة: ٦) ... ﴿فَلَمْ يَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا ...﴾

﴿...If you do not find water, then perform *tayammum*...﴾

(*Qur'an* 5: 6)

‘Abdullâh said: If they were granted a concession because of this verse, they would soon perform *tayammum* with clean earth if they found the water to be too cold.

Abu Moosâ said to ‘Abdullâh: Have you not heard what ‘Ammâr said? [He said:] The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) sent me on an errand and I became sexually impure. I could not find any water, so I rolled in the dust like an animal. Then I came to the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and told him about that.

He responded: It would have been sufficient for you to do this.

He struck his hands on the ground. Then he shook off the dust and wiped his face and hands (the left palm over the back of the right hand up to the wrist and the right palm over the back of the left hand up to the wrist).» (Muslim)

Based on the aforementioned hadith, the method of performing tayammum is as follows:

1. First of all, make the intention (in the heart) to perform tayammum.
2. Strike the earth with the palms of both hands.
3. Wipe your face once using both palms.
4. Use the left palm to wipe the back of the right hand up to the wrist.
5. Then use the right palm to wipe over the back of the left hand up to the wrist.

Ghusl

The meaning of ghusl

‘Ghusl’ is an Arabic term that means bathing the whole body. It is recommended in the Islamic Sharia in a number of circumstances. Even if individuals are not sexually impure, they should still take at least one complete bath weekly, preferably every Friday. In order to attend the Friday congregational prayers, a Muslim is strongly urged by Sharia to take a complete bath known as ghusl. Also, when one becomes sexually impure (either after having sexual intercourse or seeing wetness after waking up from a wet dream), one is required to perform ghusl.

Women who have finished their menses or post-natal bleeding are also required to purify themselves by performing ghusl in or-

der to resume the five daily prayers. Regarding ghusl, Allah has clarified:

﴿... وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُوا ...﴾ (سورة المائدة: ٦)

«...If you are in a state of ritual impurity, purify yourselves [bathe your whole body]...» (Qur'an 5: 6)

It was narrated from Qatâdah that Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) told them that Umm Sulaym (رضي الله عنها) narrated that she asked the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) about a woman who sees in her dreams what a man sees.

«The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) replied: If a woman sees that, she should perform ghusl.

Umm Sulaym said: I felt shy because of that and asked: Does that really happen?

The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) responded: How else does the resemblance (of the child to either parent) happen? The water of the man is thick and white, while the water of the woman is thin and yellow. Whichever of them prevails or comes first, the resemblance will be (to that parent).» (Muslim)

It was narrated that Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) said:

«I said: O Messenger of Allah, I am a woman with tightly braided hair; should I undo it for ghusl from *janâbah*?³⁸

He replied: No; it is sufficient for you to pour three handfuls of water over your head. Then pour water over yourself and you will become pure.» (Muslim)

Qays ibn 'Âsim narrated:

«I came to the Prophet (ﷺ) desiring (to accept) Islam. He commanded me to perform ghusl with water and the leaves of the lote-tree.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

³⁸ janâbah: a state of ritual impurity due to sexual activity or emission.

Occasions that necessitate ghusl

1. Discharge of semen as a result of sexual stimulation, whether one is awake or asleep (wet dreams). This state is known in Arabic as janâbah.
2. After sexual intercourse (or the mere coming together of the private organs of the man and the woman, even though there may be no discharge of semen), ghusl becomes obligatory.
3. A woman has to perform ghusl after her menses.
4. A woman has to perform ghusl at the end of post-natal bleeding.
5. When non-believers embrace Islam, they are required to perform ghusl after uttering the testimony of faith.
6. When Muslims die, ghusl is performed for them.
7. After washing the deceased, it is also recommended for the person who did the washing to make ghusl or perform ablution himself or herself.

How to perform ghusl

The correct method of ghusl as taught by the Prophet (ﷺ), including both the essential and voluntary acts, is as follows:

1. Make the intention to perform ghusl and say 'bismillâh'.
2. Wash both hands up to the wrists three times.
3. Wash the private parts.
4. Perform ablution in the manner already discussed, leaving the feet to be washed later, after the whole body has been washed.
5. Pour water over the head three times, massaging the hair to allow the water to reach its roots.

6. Pour water liberally over the entire body, starting with the right side and then the left side, ensuring that no part of the body is left untouched by water including armpits, inside the earlobes, inside the navel, between the fingers and toes, and so on.

It was narrated that ‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها) said:

«When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) performed ghusl in the state of sexual impurity, he would start by washing his hands. Then he would pour water with his right hand into his left and wash his private parts. Thereafter he would perform ablution just as he would for prayer. Then he would take water (and pour it over his head) and make it reach the roots of his hair, using his fingers. When he saw that it was thoroughly wet, he would pour three handfuls of water over his head. Then he would pour water over the rest of the body, and following that he would wash his feet.» (Muslim)

Note: A woman has to perform ghusl exactly like a man does. However, in case of ghusl for janâbah, if she has plaited hair she does not have to undo it. Rather, she only needs to pour three handfuls of water over her head. In the post-menstruation ghusl, however, she must undo the plaits and braids.

It was related by the Mother of the Believers, Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها), that she asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about a woman’s ghusl. The Prophet (ﷺ) told her:

«If a woman is performing ghusl after having sexual intercourse, then there is no need for her to unbraid her hair. It is sufficient that she pours water over her head three times. However, when she is performing ghusl after completing her menstrual period, she has to unbraid her hair.» (Muslim)³⁹

³⁹ For more details on the topic of women and purity, refer to the resources listed in the Appendix II of this book. (Editor)

Chapter Nine

The fourth condition: Covering the 'awrah

Another essential condition for our ṣalâh to be valid and acceptable to Allah is that our 'awrah — the parts of our body that must remain covered from public view — is sufficiently hidden. Both men and women must properly cover themselves prior to performing the ṣalâh. Allah has commanded all the children of Adam who have reached the age of puberty to cover themselves properly in every place of worship and at all times. Allah has prescribed:

(سورة الأعراف: ٣١) ﴿يَبْنَىْ ءَآدَمَ خُذُوْا زِيْنَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ ... ﴿٣١﴾﴾

«O children of Adam, wear your beautiful apparel at every time and place of prayer...» (Qur'an 7: 31)⁴⁰

Generally speaking, according to the Islamic law, both men and women are required to dress decently. It is for this reason that Allah has bestowed clothes upon humans — so that they can cover themselves and hide their nudity. Clothes are also meant to

⁴⁰ masjid: *lit.* 'a place of prostration'; it means any place on the earth where a Muslim prays. The term may also refer specifically to a mosque. (Author)

beautify in a prudent and decent manner and enable humans to stand out from animals. Allah has emphasized:

﴿يَبْنِيْٓءَادَمَ قَدْ اٰزَلْنَا عَلٰىكُمْ لِيَّاسًا يُؤْرِى سَوْءَ تِكُمْ وَرِيْشًا وَّلِيَّاسُ النِّقَوٰى ذٰلِكَ خَيْرٌ
ذٰلِكَ مِنْ ءَايٰتِ اللّٰهِ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَذَّكَّرُوْنَ ﴿٢٦﴾﴾
(سورة الأعراف: ٢٦)

«O children of Adam, We have bestowed upon you clothing to conceal your private parts and as an adornment, but the clothing of righteousness — that is the best. That is from the signs of Allah that perhaps they will remember.»
(Qur'an 7: 26)

Nudity is a seduction of Satan

Allah has not only bestowed clothes upon us. He has also warned us against our greatest enemy, Satan, and his plots and tricks. He has cautioned that we should not be tricked by Satan. We should neither be tempted nor seduced to remove our clothes and become indecent, exposing our nakedness like animals. In such a case, we would be prone to promiscuity and immorality.

﴿يَبْنِيْٓءَادَمَ لَا يَفْتِنَنَّكُمُ الشَّيْطٰنُ كَمَا اَخْرَجَ اٰبَوَيْكُمْ مِنَ الْجَنَّةِ يَنْزِعُ عَنْهُمَا لِيَّاسَهُمَا لِيُرِيَهُمَا سَوْءَ تِهِمَا ۚ اِنَّهٗ يَرٰكُمْ هُوَ وَفِيْهِلَهُ مِنْ حَيْثُ لَا تَرَوْنَهُمْ ۗ اِنَّا جَعَلْنَا الشَّيْطٰنَ اَوْلِيَآءَ لِلَّذِيْنَ لَا يُؤْمِنُوْنَ ﴿٢٧﴾﴾
(سورة الأعراف: ٢٧)

«O children of Adam, let not Satan tempt you as he removed your parents from paradise, stripping them of their clothing to show them their private parts. Indeed, he sees you, he and his tribe, from where you do not see them. Indeed, We have made the devils allies of those who do not believe.»
(Qur'an 7: 27)

Feelings of shyness and modesty are natural and instinctive. One naturally feels shy in exposing one's private parts before anyone else. On the other hand, sex is the greatest weakness of the

human race, which is why Satan has selected this weak spot for his attack on his adversaries. He has devised many schemes to strike at humankind's modesty. The first step he took in this direction was to expose the nakedness of Adam and Eve to each other in order to open the door of indecency before them and to beguile them into sexuality. To this day, Satan and his disciples are adopting the same scheme of depriving women and men of feelings of modesty and shyness. This is successful to such a large extent that many do not perceive any 'progress' unless women are exposed and exhibited to all and sundry.⁴¹

Islamic legislation, on the other hand, requires both men and women to dress decently and appropriately. Contrary to what is portrayed in the mass media and some Orientalist works, men cannot dress as they wish. Like women, they too have to follow a dress code. The misunderstanding that men can dress as they please supports the lie that women are discriminated against in Islamic legislation. However, the truth is that both men and women in Islam must dress decently as human beings. They should not be as nude as animals, thus provoking sexual immorality.⁴²

The required covering for men

The part of the body that must be covered at all times (excluding in front of one's spouse) with respect to males is from the navel to the knees. (Bukhari)

While performing ṣalāh, the shoulders should also be covered if sufficient cloth is available.

⁴¹ Capt. (Rtd.) Yahya M. A. Ondigo, *Forty Hadiths on Poisonous Social Habits with Short Commentaries* (Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2012), 134.

⁴² Ondigo, *Forty Hadiths on Poisonous Social Habits*, 134-135.

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

«None of you should offer prayer in a single garment of which no part is over his shoulders.» (Muslim)

It should be noted here that tight pants which expose the shape of the private parts are not acceptable for prayers or for covering the 'awrah unless a loose and long shirt is worn over them to cover that area. This is also in accordance with the guidance of the Prophet (ﷺ).

«'Abdullâh ibn Buraydah reported from his father, Buraydah ibn al-Haseeb, that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) forbade (anyone) from praying in a single garment (wrap) without tying it around the shoulders, and (he also forbade) praying in trousers while not wearing an upper wrap or cloak over it.» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

It is also forbidden to wear garments or trousers that hang below the ankles to wear shirts that reveal the upper part of the buttocks when one bows. Şalâh in such types of trousers or garments may not be accepted.

It was narrated from al-A'la ibn 'Abdur-Raḥmân that his father said:

«I asked Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri about the garment that is worn wrapped around the lower half of the body, and he said: You have come to one who knows about it. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

The lower garment of the Muslim (man) extends to midway down his shins, and there is no sin if it comes between that and the ankles. But whatever is below the ankles is in the fire (of hell). Allah will not look at the one who lets his lower garment drag out of conceit.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

The required covering for women

The 'awrah of a woman who has reached puberty includes the entire body except for that which may be seen of her face and her hands up to the wrists. This applies both for prayers and in the public domain.

It was narrated from 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) that Asmâ' bint Abi Bakr (رضي الله عنها) entered into the presence of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) wearing a thin garment. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) turned away from her and said:

O Asmâ'! When a woman reaches the age of menstruation, it is not proper for anything to be seen of her (body) except this and this, and he pointed to his face and hands. (A weak hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)⁴³

It was narrated from 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said: «Allah does not accept the prayer of a woman (who has reached the age of menstruation) without a *khimâr* (a head-scarf covering the hair, ears, neck, and bosom).» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

Furthermore, the 'awrah of a woman includes the top of her feet; this is understood from the following incident:

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) told his Companions to raise their lower garments well above the ankles. When his wife Umm Salamah heard this, she asked:

«What about a woman, O Messenger of Allah?

He responded: They should let it down a hand span.

Umm Salamah said: Then it will show (her feet).

⁴³ Even though this is a weak hadith, most scholars accept that this is the minimum coverage required for a woman for prayer and in public. (Editor)

He said: Then a forearm's length, but no more than that.»
(A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

It is further required for the clothes to be loose-fitting and opaque so that they do not reveal the figure of a woman. Moreover, they should be clean, free of any form of impurities, filth, urine, vomit, blood, pus, faeces, and the like. It is also important for the clothes to be free of any pictures of living beings or odd writings on them. They must also not be too conspicuous. (They must be plain.)

Chapter Ten

The fifth condition:

Arrival of the appointed time

The obligatory prayers are in accordance with the biological clock

All the obligatory prayers, under normal circumstances, must be performed at their specific, appointed times. If not made at their appointed times, prayers are not acceptable except in specific instances. We are not allowed to perform the five obligatory prayers or the Friday and Eid congregational prayers at any time we wish. God Almighty has prescribed all the obligatory prayers at specific times, as He has affirmed in the Glorious Qur'an:

﴿فَإِذَا قُضِيَتْ الصَّلَاةُ فَادْكُرُوا اللَّهَ فِيمَا وُقُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِكُمْ ۚ فَإِذَا اطْمَأْنَنْتُمْ فَأَقِيمُوا الصَّلَاةَ ۚ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ كَانَتْ عَلَى الْمُؤْمِنِينَ كِتَابًا مَوْفُوتًا

(سورة النساء: ١٠٣)



﴿And when you have completed the prayer, remember Allah standing, sitting, or [lying] on your sides. But when you become

secure, re-establish prayer. Verily, the prayer is enjoined on the believers at fixed hours. ﴿ (Qur'an 4: 103)

The times for all the five daily obligatory prayers have been enjoined in such a way that they do not become a burden on us or interfere with our normal, everyday activities. Furthermore, each of the five obligatory prayers takes no more than ten minutes. Allah has instructed with respect to the arrangement of those times:

﴿وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ طَرَفَيِ النَّهَارِ وَزُلْفًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ إِنَّ الْحَسَنَاتِ يُذْهِبْنَ السَّيِّئَاتِ ذَلِكَ ذِكْرَى لِلذَّكِرِينَ﴾ (سورة هود: ١١٤)

﴿And perform the ṣalâh at the two ends of the day and in some hours of the night. Verily, the good deeds remove the evil deeds. That is a reminder for the mindful.﴾ (Qur'an 11: 114)

﴿أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ لِدُلُوكِ الشَّمْسِ إِلَى غَسَقِ اللَّيْلِ وَقُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ إِنَّ قُرْآنَ الْفَجْرِ كَانَ مَشْهُودًا﴾ (سورة الإسراء: ٧٨)

﴿Perform the ṣalâh from midday until the darkness of the night, and recite the Qur'an in the early dawn. Verily, the recitation of the Qur'an in the early dawn is ever witnessed.﴾ (Qur'an 17: 78)

In fact, one of the best and dearest deeds to Allah is to perform each ṣalâh at its proper designated time.

‘Abdullâh (ﷺ) narrated:

«I asked the Prophet (ﷺ): Which deed is the dearest to Allah?

He replied: To perform the (daily compulsory) prayers at their stated times.

I inquired: What is the next (in goodness)?

He responded: To be good and dutiful to your parents.

I again queried: What is the next (in goodness)?

He answered: To participate in jihad (fighting in Allah's cause).» (Bukhari)

Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), the last prophet and messenger for all humanity, clarified the beginning and ending times for each of the obligatory prayers. This was in accordance with the practical demonstration given by the archangel Gabriel to convey to him the exact time for each ṣalâh and how it is to be performed.

After demonstrating to his Companions how all the five daily obligatory prayers should be performed, in their exact form and at fixed times, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said:

«O people, I have only done this for you to follow me and learn my form of ṣalâh.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

This is Gabriel (جبرائيل). He came to teach you your religion. He prayed the fajr prayer when the dawn appeared. He prayed the *dhuh*r (early afternoon) prayer when the sun had (passed its zenith). He prayed the 'aṣr prayer when he saw that the shadow of an object was equal to its height. He prayed the *maghrib* (sunset) prayer when the sun had set and it was permissible for the fasting person to eat. He prayed the 'ishâ' prayer when the twilight had disappeared. Then he came the following day and prayed fajr when it had gotten a little lighter. He prayed *dhuh*r when the shadow of an object was equal to its height. He prayed 'aṣr when the shadow of an object was equal to twice its height. He prayed 'ishâ' when a short period of the night had passed. Then he said: The prayer (can be said any time) between the time you prayed yesterday and the time you prayed today.» (A reliable hadith recorded by an-Nasâ'i)

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) also narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Indeed for (the time of) ṣalâh, there is a beginning and an end. The beginning of the time for the dhuhr prayer is when the sun passes the zenith, and the end of its time is when the time for 'aṣr begins.

The beginning of the time of 'aṣr is when its time begins (when the shadow of an object is equal to its height), and the end of its time is when the sun yellows (turns pale) or when the shadow of an object is twice its height.

The beginning of the time of maghrib is when the sun has set, and the end of its time is when the twilight has vanished (when the horizon is invisible because of darkness).

The beginning of the time of 'ishâ' is the later one, when the horizon has vanished, and the end of its time is when the night is at its half.

The beginning of the time for fajr is when dawn begins, and its end is when the sun rises.» (A sound hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)

Mâlik ibn Huwayrith (رضي الله عنه) reported:

«We came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and stayed with him for twenty days and nights. We were all young and about the same age. The Prophet (ﷺ) was very kind and merciful. When he recognized our longing for our families, he asked about our homes and the people there, and we told him. Then he asked us to go back to our families and stay with them, to teach them (the religion) and order them to do good things. He also mentioned some other things, which I have (remembered or) forgotten.

The Prophet (ﷺ) then added: Offer ṣalâh as you have seen me praying; and when it is time for ṣalâh, one of you should

pronounce the adhân, and the eldest among you should lead the ṣalâh.» (Bukhari)

Prayer times for the five daily, obligatory prayers

Angel Gabriel (ﷺ) taught Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) the prayer times in accordance with Allah's command.

Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

«Gabriel (ﷺ) led the prayer at the House (the Kaaba in Makkah) twice.

He prayed dhuhr with me when the sun had passed its zenith and (the shadow) was the length of a sandal strap. He prayed 'aṣr with me when the shadow was equivalent in length (to an object). He prayed — meaning maghrib — with me at the time that a person breaks his fast. He prayed 'ishâ' with me when the redness of the sky had disappeared. He prayed fajr with me at a time when eating and drinking had become prohibited for the fasting person.

The next day, he prayed dhuhr with me when the shadow was equivalent in length (to an object). He prayed 'aṣr with me when the shadow (of an object) was equivalent to twice its length. He prayed maghrib with me when the fasting person breaks his fast. He prayed 'ishâ' with me after a third of the night (had passed). He prayed fajr with me, and the light was apparent (around us).

Then he turned to face me and said: O Muhammad! These were the times (of prayers) of the prophets before you, and the time (for you and your people) is between these two times.» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

The dawn prayer (*ṣalât ul-fajr*)

This prayer consists of two obligatory and two sunnah units. From the aforementioned hadith, one can conclude that it can be referred to as the dawn or morning prayer: *ṣalât ul-fajr* or *ṣalât uṣ-ṣubḥ*. Its time is from the first light of dawn until shortly before sunrise, long before breakfast or the beginning of the day's schedule. This enables one to rise early from the bed, breathe in the fresh morning air, and enjoy Allah's great and unique blessings distributed in the early morning hours.

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«During your sleep, Satan ties three knots at the back of the head of each one of you. On every knot, he reads and exhales the following words: The night is long for you, so stay asleep. When a person wakes up and remembers Allah, one knot is undone. When he performs ablution, the second knot is undone. When he offers ṣalâh, the third knot is undone and he or she gets up in the morning energetically, in a good mood and with a good heart. Otherwise, one gets up in a bad mood, feeling lethargic (and without a good heart).» (Bukhari)

What a great difference there is between the Muslims who manage to successfully unravel the three knots of the devil and those who remain under the devil's spell! The former start their day actively, mentioning the name of Allah and performing their prayers. Then they set out into the battle of life, feeling perfectly well, both spiritually and physically, with a lot of zest. The latter remain asleep until very late in the morning. When they wake up, they feel horribly fatigued both physically as well as spiritually. This feeling of lethargy persists throughout the day.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Time in the Life of the Muslim* (Cairo, Egypt: Islamic Inc. Publishing & Distribution, 1998), 31.

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

«The most burdensome prayers for the hypocrites are the ‘ishâ and the fajr prayers. If they knew what there is in them (of blessings), they would come even if they had to crawl.» (Muslim)

It was also narrated from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Prayer in congregation is superior to the individual prayer of a man by twenty-five degrees. The angels of the night and the angels of the day meet at fajr prayer.» (Muslim)

The noon prayer (*ṣalât udh-dhuhr*)

The noon prayer, also known as *ṣalât udh-dhuhr*, consists of four units. Its time begins from just past high noon until mid-afternoon.

The time of this prayer also does not in any way interfere with the normal work routine since it is usual to take a break for lunch. This prayer falls exactly within that time in most work places, schools, colleges, and other institutions. Hence, as Muslims we have no excuse for not performing this prayer on time. However busy we may be, it is part of human nature to take a break and nourish the body with its organic needs of food, drink, and some rest. Again, the timing of the noon prayer caters to all these needs in the perfect biological clock.

The afternoon prayer (*ṣalât ul-‘aṣr*)

The afternoon prayer, known as *ṣalât ul-‘aṣr*, also consists of four obligatory units. It has been described in the Qur’an as the

middle prayer. Its time is from mid-afternoon until shortly before sunset.

‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated:

«Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) used to offer the ‘aṣr prayers at a time when the sunshine was still inside my chambers and no shadow had yet appeared in it.» (Bukhari)

Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) reported:

«Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) used to offer the ‘aṣr prayer at a time when the sun was still hot and high. If a person went to al-‘Awâli, he would reach there while the sun was still high.» (Bukhari)⁴⁵

This is perhaps the most neglected prayer as one is often preoccupied with work and other affairs at this time. That is why Allah has particularly instructed the believers to guard it strictly and not to be heedless of it. Allah has cautioned:

﴿حَفِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَىٰ وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ﴾

(سورة البقرة: ٢٣٨)

﴿Maintain with care the prayers and [in particular] the middle [‘aṣr] prayer, and stand before Allah devoutly obedient.﴾

(Qur’an 2: 238)

Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) strongly recommended performing ṣalât ul-‘aṣr on time and reprimanded those who were lazy about it or neglected it completely. He warned them that they would be like those who have lost their families and properties. For those who kept on procrastinating until ‘aṣr time was over, the Prophet (ﷺ) said that they were likely to fall into hypocrisy. May Allah protect us all from hypocrisy!

Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

⁴⁵ al-‘Awâli is a village in al-Madinah province, western Saudi Arabia. (Editor)

«Whoever misses the ‘aṣr prayer (intentionally), it is as if he has lost his family and property.» (Bukhari)

Abul-Maleeh narrated:

«We were with Buraydah in a battle on a cloudy day and he said: Offer the ‘aṣr prayer early, for the Prophet (ﷺ) said: Whoever omits the ‘aṣr prayer, all his (good) deeds of that day will be lost.» (Bukhari)

«It was narrated from al-A‘lâ ibn ‘Abdur-Raḥmân that (one day) when he had finished dhuhr, he went to Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) in his house in Basra. His house was beside the mosque. (He said:) When we entered, Anas asked: Have you prayed ‘aṣr?

We replied: We have just finished dhuhr.

He instructed: Pray ‘aṣr.

We stood up and prayed, and when we had finished, he said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: That is the prayer of the hypocrite. He sits watching the sun; then when it is between the horns of Satan, he stands up and pecks out four units in which he remembers Allah only a little.» (Muslim and Abu Dâwood)

The evening prayer (ṣalât ul-maghrib)

This ṣalâh consists of three obligatory units. Its time begins immediately after sunset, lasting until the last light of the day has faded — the shortest time span of any of the prayers. In many places, it usually has the largest attendance, because its time begins when people have left their work places and educational institutes and when most businesses have closed down. Thus, many people have reached their residences. It is sometimes the prayer

with the largest number of people other than the Friday congregational and Eid prayers.

This ṣalâh has an added advantage in that the Qur'an recitation is out loud, thus attracting more attendees. It is also the ṣalâh after which many sit back and remain in the mosque to attend study circles, listen to various Islamic lectures, or recite and study the noble Qur'an on their own while waiting to catch the next ṣalâh, *ṣalât ul- 'ishâ'*, the last prayer of the day, in congregation.

«Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

Shall I not tell you something by means of which Allah erases the sins and raises people in status (in paradise)?

They (the Companions) replied: Yes, O Messenger of Allah!

He said: Performing ablution properly when it is difficult to do so, taking many steps to the mosque (even coming from afar), and waiting for the next ṣalâh after observing ṣalâh; that is similar to guarding the frontiers (and he repeated that).» (Muslim)

The night prayer (ṣalât ul- 'ishâ')

This ṣalâh consists of four obligatory units. The Qur'an recitation in the first two units is out loud, as in the fajr and maghrib ṣalâh. Its time begins when darkness falls, and it ends at midnight or shortly before dawn. Like the fajr prayer, it is the hardest and the most burdensome for the hypocrites, as the Prophet (ﷺ) has said. Its virtues, like the fajr ṣalâh, surpass other prayers.

'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Abi 'Amrah reported:

«'Uthmân ibn 'Affân entered the mosque after maghrib and sat alone. I sat with him, and he said: O son of my brother, I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: Whoever prays

the 'ishâ' prayer in congregation, it is as if he spent half of the night in prayer. Whoever prays (the next) fajr prayer in congregation, it is as if he spent the whole night in prayer.» (Muslim)

It was narrated from Shu'bah from Sayyâr ibn Salâmah, who said:

«I heard Abu Barzah say: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) did not mind delaying 'ishâ' prayer until halfway through the night. He did not like sleeping before it or speaking after it.» (Muslim)

The 'ishâ' prayer, like all the other four obligatory prayers, does not cause any inconvenience in our lives or destabilize our normal schedules of activities; hence, it also fits perfectly with our biological clock.

Thus, the beauty of Islam and these five daily prayers is that we begin our day with prayers first thing in the morning, praising and glorifying Allah and beseeching Him for all our needs and for success in our endeavours. Similarly, we end our busy day with prayers, expressing our gratitude to Allah for all our accomplishments and requesting His forgiveness for all our failures and shortcomings throughout the day. Thus, when we retire to bed, our consciences are clear that we have forgiven all those who have wronged us and Allah has also forgiven us for all those whom we wronged or offended. What a beautiful and satisfying way to end our day!

However, we should note that even though our ṣalâh, within the limits of the appointed times as described by Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), is valid and acceptable, the best ṣalâh in the sight of Allah is the one performed as early as possible. This is corroborated by the hadith quoted at the beginning of this chapter. Consequently, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) has warned us to be wary of Satan with his plot to make us lazy and heedless about waking up early to

perform the fajr prayer, thereby making us lose all the rewards and begin our day with loss and failure.

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: «During your sleep, Satan ties three knots at the back of the head of each one of you. On every knot, he reads and exhales the following words: The night is long for you, so stay asleep. When a person wakes up and remembers Allah, one knot is undone. When he performs ablution, the second knot is undone. When he offers ṣalâh, the third knot is undone, and he gets up in the morning energetically, in a good mood and with a good heart. Otherwise, one gets up in a bad mood, feeling lethargic (and without a good heart).» (Bukhari)

Making up a missed prayer

It is highly important to ensure that the time for a particular ṣalâh has started before one performs it. In some special circumstances, it is permissible for certain prayers to be performed before or after their designated time (joined with the preceding or the following ṣalâh).⁴⁶ However, under normal circumstances, no ṣalâh is allowed before its time period. The ṣalâh that is performed after its time period has passed is regarded as *qadâ'* (making up a missed ṣalâh).⁴⁷

Abu Qatâdah narrated:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) was once on a journey and he detoured (from the path), so I went with him. He said: Look!

⁴⁶ This has been discussed in Chapter Fourteen, under the sub-heading: The prayer of a traveller (*ṣalât ul-musâfir*).

⁴⁷ Philips, *Islamic Studies Book 3*, 148.

I responded: There is a rider ... two riders ... three riders... until we became seven.

He said: Guard our prayer for us (meaning the fajr prayer). However, they fell into a deep sleep and were only awakened by the heat of the sun. They stood up and continued for a short while before they camped and performed ablution. Bilâl made the call to prayer and they prayed two units (sunnah) of fajr. Then they prayed (the two obligatory units of) fajr and continued to ride (onwards). They said to one another: We have been careless in (performing) our prayers.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: There is no carelessness in sleep; verily carelessness occurs only while one is awake. So if one of you unintentionally misses a prayer, let him pray it as soon as he remembers, and the next day (do not delay it but pray it) at its time.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

This narration clarifies that performing the sunnah (voluntary prayer) of fajr before the obligatory fajr prayer, when praying that prayer late, is allowed. There is no blame for the one who genuinely oversleeps. In another hadith, the Prophet (ﷺ) once again clarified the case of the one who genuinely forgets to perform a particular prayer, then remembers afterwards:

Abu Qatâdah narrated:

«They asked the Prophet (ﷺ) about when they slept past the ṣalâh. He said: There is no negligence in sleep; negligence is only while one is awake. So when one of you forgets a ṣalâh or sleeps through it, let him pray it when he remembers it.» (A sound hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)

Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«If one of you forgets a prayer, then let him pray it as soon as he remembers. There is no (other) expiation upon him except for this.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

The Prophet (ﷺ) further guided us as to how the missed prayers are to be made up if the time of the next prayer has started and people have already begun to offer that particular prayer in the mosque.

Jâbir ibn ‘Abdullâh (رضي الله عنه) reported:

«On the day of the Battle of the Trench, ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (رضي الله عنه) came after the sun had set. He cursed the disbelievers of the *Quraysh* (the dominant tribe in Makkah at the time) and said: O Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ)! I could not offer the ‘aṣr prayer until the sun was about to set.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: By Allah! I, too, have not offered the ṣalâh.

So we turned towards Buthân and the Prophet (ﷺ) performed ablution. We, too, performed ablution and offered the ‘aṣr prayer after the sun had set, and then he offered the maghrib prayer.» (Bukhari)

On the basis of this hadith, Muslim scholars have ruled that missed prayers must be made up in the correct order.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ There are some exceptions, for instance, if the time for the current prayer is running out. For a detailed ruling, please refer to Islam Q&A, “In what order missed prayers should be made up,” *Islam-QA.com*, <http://www.islam-qa.com/en/ref/49019> (accessed April 2, 2012). (Editor)

Chapter Eleven

The sixth condition: Facing the Kaaba

*Kaaba: The first sanctuary
dedicated to Allah's worship*

This condition stipulates that regardless of one's location, if one is able to reasonably determine the direction of the Kaaba then one must pray facing that direction. The Kaaba is the first House established for the worship of Allah (ﷻ), built on this earth in the valley of Makkah more than three thousand years ago by Prophet Abraham,⁴⁹ assisted by his eldest son, Prophet Ishmael, according to Allah's commands. Allah has recounted:

⁴⁹ Muslim scholars differ over who was the first to build the Sacred House, known as the Kaaba, in Makkah — whether it was Prophet Adam or Abraham. This difference of opinion stems from the verses of the Qur'an that state that when Prophet Abraham was commanded by God Almighty to separate his two families (his wives Sarah and Hagar), he took his second wife, Hagar, and his first son, Ishmael, and left them in the valley of Makkah near the Sacred House. He then made the following supplication: ﴿Our Lord, I have settled some of my descendants in an uncultivated =

﴿وَإِذْ يَرْفَعُ إِبْرَاهِيمُ الْقَوَاعِدَ مِنَ الْبَيْتِ وَإِسْمَاعِيلُ رَبَّنَا تَقَبَّلْ مِنَّا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ﴾
 (سورة البقرة: ١٢٧)

﴿And remember Abraham and Ishmael were raising the foundations of the House [with this prayer]: Our Lord! Accept [this service] from us. Verily, You are the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing.﴾

(Qur'an 2: 127)

The Kaaba itself is a small cuboid stone structure which stands inside the compound of the Sacred Mosque in the centre of the city of Makkah. The first sanctuary on the earth dedicated to the worship of one true God, the Kaaba with its celebrated Black Stone (thought to be originally a meteorite from heaven) is unique. The pilgrims are required to either kiss the Black Stone, touch it, or point to it as the circumstances may allow while one is circum-ambulating the Kaaba. This is a gesture of love and respect for the Sacred House and an emulation of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ).

= valley near Your Sacred House, our Lord, that they may establish prayer. So make hearts among the people incline toward them and provide for them from the fruits so that they might be grateful.﴾ (Qur'an 14: 37) The following is stated in another verse in the Qur'an: ﴿Indeed, the first House [of worship] established for humankind was that at Bakkah [Makkah] — blessed and a guidance for the worlds. In it there are clear signs [such as] the standing place of Abraham. Whoever enters it shall be safe. And [due] to Allah from the people is a pilgrimage to the House — for whoever is able to find thereto a way. But whoever disbelieves, then indeed, Allah is free from need of the worlds.﴾ (Qur'an 3: 96-97) Verse 127 of Soorat *al-Baqarah* (quoted in the main text) says that Prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael raised the foundation of the Sacred House, implying that it was Abraham who built the first House. All in all, it seems — and Allah knows best — that where the Kaaba is presently situated was consecrated as a holy ground. Perhaps there was a House previously built by Prophet Adam, which was destroyed with time, and the only thing left was the foundation that was later rebuilt by Abraham and Ishmael. (Author)

Because of its unique significance, the Kaaba, which is wrapped in a woven black covering embellished with the Qur'anic verses embroidered in gold, has become known in Islamic history as the Sacred House.

Later, it became a necessary condition of ṣalâh to face the direction of the Kaaba. Allah has ordered:

﴿وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۚ وَإِنَّهُ لَلْحَقُّ مِنْ رَبِّكَ ۚ وَمَا لِلَّهِ بِغَفْلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٤٩﴾ وَمِنْ حَيْثُ خَرَجْتَ فَوَلِّ وَجْهَكَ شَطْرَ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ ۚ وَحَيْثُ مَا كُنْتُمْ فَوَلُّوا وُجُوهَكُمْ شَطْرَهُ ۚ إِنَّهَا يُكُونُ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَيْكُمْ حُجَّةٌ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنْهُمْ فَلَا تَحْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِي ۚ وَلَا تَمْنَىٰ عَلَيْكُمْ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿١٥٠﴾﴾

(سورة البقرة: ١٤٩-١٥٠)

«So from wherever you go out [for prayer], turn your face towards al-Masjid al-Ḥarâm [the Sacred Mosque — the Kaaba], and indeed it is the truth from your Lord. Allah is not unaware of what you do. From wherever you go out [for prayer], turn your face towards al-Masjid al-Ḥarâm. Wherever you may be, turn your faces towards it in order that the people will not have any argument against you, except for those of them who commit wrong; so fear them not, but fear Me. And [it is] so I may complete My favour upon you and that you may be guided.» (Qur'an 2: 149-150)

Facing the direction of the Kaaba during ṣalâh, regardless of one's location, is known as facing the qibla. Facing the Sacred Mosque in Makkah during ṣalâh does not in any way imply that Muslims worship the Kaaba with its Black Stone or that God is physically present in Makkah at the Sacred Mosque. This is because Allah is well-established on His throne above the seven heavens, and He is understood to be omnipresent in terms of his His knowledge, wisdom, and power.

(سورة طه: ٥)

﴿الرَّحْمَنُ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ اسْتَوَى﴾

﴿The Most Gracious [Allah] is firmly established on the throne.﴾

(Qur'an 20: 5)

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ مَا يَكُونُ مِنْ نَجْوَى ثَلَاثَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ رَابِعُهُمْ وَلَا خَمْسَةٍ إِلَّا هُوَ سَادِسُهُمْ وَلَا آدْنَى مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْثَرُ إِلَّا هُوَ مَعَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كَانُوا

(سورة المجادلة: ٧)

﴿٧﴾

ثُمَّ يَنْتَبِهُم بِمَا عَمِلُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَمَةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ﴾

﴿Have you not considered that Allah knows whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is on the earth? There is no private conversation of three but He is the fourth of them,⁵⁰ nor of five but He is the sixth of them, nor of less than that or of more but He is with them wheresoever they may be. Then, on the Day of Resurrection, He will inform them of what they did. Verily, Allah is All-Knower of everything.﴾

(Qur'an 58: 7)

The significance of facing the Kaaba during *ṣalâh*

What is the point of Muslims facing the direction of the Kaaba during every *ṣalâh*? First and foremost, this is in order to obey the command of Allah. Secondly, it is a blessing from Allah which unites all the Muslims throughout the globe in *ṣalâh*. This is because they all face the same direction, regardless of their location.

Millions of Muslims in every part of the globe turn their faces towards the same central point five times a day as they offer their worship to God. Since at all times some people in some parts of the world are engaged in *Salaat*, the circle of worship

⁵⁰ Through His knowledge of them and of their secrets.

with its focus towards the Sacred Mosque continues uninterrupted. The Ka'bah is the visible symbol of God's Unity, representing in concrete form His centrality in the life of the Muslim, the focal point for Muslims of all times and places to turn toward in their worship as a symbol of their unity as one community submitting to the One God, a part of the endless stream of worshippers facing and circling around it unceasingly since remote antiquity in the glorification of God Most High.⁵¹

How to determine the qibla (direction of the Kaaba)

Under normal circumstances and irrespective of location, we should determine the direction of the qibla before we begin our *salâh*; this is to ensure that we face the Kaaba while praying. This is in accordance with the following hadith:

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

«What is between the east and the west is the qibla.» (A sound hadith recorded by Ibn Mâjah)

The scholars have said that when Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) made this statement he was in Madinah, which is situated directly to the north of Makkah. This ensured that the Companions had no difficulty in determining the qibla from Madinah.

From this general statement of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), scholars have also concluded that wheresoever one may be it is easy to determine the qibla. Therefore, those living to the south of Makkah will face their north, those to the north of Makkah will face

⁵¹ Suzanne Haneef, *What Everyone Should Know About Islam and Muslims* (New Delhi: Adam Publishers and Distributors, 1994), 54.

the south, those to the east of Makkah will face the west, those to the west of Makkah will face the east; and so on.

To determine the qibla ourselves, we first have to figure out which direction we are facing (which can be done using a magnetic compass). For example, those living in United States and Canada will face the northeast as their qibla.⁵²

Once a reasonable direction of qibla has been determined and a mosque facing that direction constructed, there is no need to constantly monitor and change the direction of the qibla every time a more accurate magnetic compass is obtained.

As for those living in the city of Makkah, it is enough for them if they can see the Kaaba. They only need to directly face it. In that case, they will have fulfilled the condition of facing the qibla when performing their ṣalâh.

If one is unable to accurately determine the direction of the qibla, he or she should make the most intelligent guess and perform the ṣalâh facing that particular direction.

In addition, if one is praying while using a mode of transportation such as a horse, vehicle, train, aircraft, or ship — then as the vessel is moving, the direction it is facing is considered to be the direction of the qibla.

«Ibn ‘Umar narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) performed his ṣalâh facing his she-camel or his mount; he would perform ṣalâh while on his mount, whichever direction it was facing.» (A sound hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)

⁵² Because this is the shortest distance — over the North Pole — between North America and Makkah. (Editor)

Chapter Twelve

The seventh condition: Humility and devotion (*al-khushoo'*)

This condition requires us to become completely absorbed in ṣalâh, thinking of nothing else except the communication between ourselves and the Lord through words of praise, gratitude, and glorification. That is why when we stand up to begin our ṣalâh, the first requirement is what is known as the opening takbeer: the initial statement 'Allâhu akbar' that renders unlawful everything that is normally lawful except communion with Allah.

To merely go through the ritual of prayer will not help the believers to fulfil the obligations of prayer. For Salaah to be acceptable, it must proceed sincerely and fervently from the heart. This is possible through the believer attempting to fully concentrate on the supplications he utters in the various postures, by being conscious of His [Allah's] presence, by making sure that he is distanced from noise and by being physically comfortable by not being overly hungry or sleepy or suffering from discomforts of weather.⁵³

Allah has described this level of concentration and devotion in ṣalâh as a requirement for those who wish to succeed:

⁵³ Philips, *Islamic Studies Book 2*, 178.

﴿قَدْ أَفْلَحَ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ فِي صَلَاتِهِمْ خَاشِعُونَ ﴿٢﴾﴾

(سورة المؤمنون: ١-٢)

«Certainly will the believers have succeeded: they who are during their prayer humbly submissive.» (Qur'an 23: 1-2)

Furthermore, ṣalâh becomes burdensome unless performed with humility, concentration, and devotion. Allah has declared:

﴿وَاسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ وَإِنَّهَا لَكَبِيرَةٌ إِلَّا عَلَى الْخَاشِعِينَ ﴿٤٥﴾﴾

(سورة البقرة: ٤٥)

«And seek help through patience and prayer, and indeed, it is extremely heavy and hard except for the humble.» (Qur'an 2: 45)

The meaning of *khushoo'*

According to its usage in the noble Qur'an, the Arabic word *khushoo'* has a variety of meanings. However, it can be chiefly defined as fear of Allah and humility. For instance, Allah has described in the glorious Qur'an:

﴿إِنَّ الَّذِينَ هُمْ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ رَبِّهِمْ مُشْفِقُونَ ﴿٥٧﴾﴾

(سورة المؤمنون: ٥٧)

«Verily! Those who live in awe for fear of their Lord.»

(Qur'an 23: 57)

﴿...الْيَوْمَ يَنْسَى الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنِ ﴿٣﴾﴾

(سورة المائدة: ٣)

«...This day those who disbelieve have despaired of [defeating] your religion; so fear them not, but fear Me...» (Qur'an 5: 3)

In these two verses and many more in the Qur'an, the understood meaning of *khushoo'* is fear of Allah (ﷻ). In other places in the Qur'an, Allah has used the same root word to indicate humil-

ity, submissiveness, concentration, and devotion. Allah has mentioned:

﴿إِنَّ الْمُسْلِمِينَ وَالْمُسْلِمَاتِ وَالْمُؤْمِنِينَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْقَانِتِينَ وَالْقَانِتَاتِ وَالصَّادِقِينَ وَالصَّادِقَاتِ وَالصَّابِرِينَ وَالصَّابِرَاتِ وَالْخَاشِعِينَ وَالْخَاشِعَاتِ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقِينَ وَالْمُتَصَدِّقَاتِ وَالصَّانِعِينَ وَالصَّانِعَاتِ وَالْحَافِظِينَ وَالْحَافِظَاتِ وَالذَّاكِرِينَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا وَالذَّاكِرَاتِ أَعَدَّ اللَّهُ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةً وَأَجْرًا عَظِيمًا﴾ (سورة الأحزاب: ٣٥)

«Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the women who do so, and the men who remember Allah often and the women who do so — for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward.»

(Qur'an 33: 35)

﴿وَزَكَرِيَّا إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ. رَبِّ لَا تَذَرْنِي فَرْدًا وَأَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْوَارِثِينَ ۝٨٩ فَاسْتَجَبْنَا لَهُ، وَوَهَبْنَا لَهُ، يَحْيَىٰ وَأَصْلَحْنَا لَهُ، زَوْجَهُ ۖ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا يُسْرِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ وَيَدْعُونَنَا رِعْبًا وَرَهْبًا ۖ وَكَانُوا لَنَا خَاشِعِينَ﴾ (سورة الأنبياء: ٨٩-٩٠)

«And Zachariah, when he called to his Lord: My Lord, do not leave me alone [with no heir], while You are the best of inheritors. So We responded to him, and We gave to him John, and amended for him his wife. Indeed, they used to hasten to good deeds and supplicate Us in hope and fear, and they were to Us humbly submissive.»

(Qur'an 21: 89-90)

However, with respect to ṣalâh, the word khushoo‘ means that believers perform it with all their heart — focused to the exclusion of all else — with concentration, calmness, serenity, tranquillity, dignity, and humility. It also means that a person stands before Allah with a heart that is totally humble and submissive to Him.⁵⁴

In his book *33 Ways of Developing Al-Khushoo‘*, Shaykh Muhammad Ṣâliḥ al-Munajjid has stated that the site of khushoo‘ is the heart. Its effects and manifestations are seen physically in the way a person behaves during ṣalâh. The different parts of the body follow the state of the heart. If the heart is corrupted with negligence and various forms of preoccupations and insinuations from Satan, the worship of the body’s faculties will also be corrupted accordingly. Thus, worshippers are only rewarded for their ṣalâh in accordance with the level of concentration, humility, and devotion they maintain during its performance.⁵⁵

‘Ammâr ibn Yâsir reported that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

«A person leaves (after having prayed), and nothing is recorded for him except a tenth of his prayer, (or) a ninth of it, (or) an eighth of it, (or) a seventh of it, (or) a sixth of it, (or) a fifth of it, (or) a fourth of it, (or) a third of it, (or) a half of it.» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

Preoccupation with one’s worldly thoughts during ṣalâh is becoming increasingly common due to devilish insinuations, straying thoughts, lack of concentration, absence of humility, lack of understanding about what one is doing during ṣalâh, and improper or imperfect performance of the various obligatory acts of ṣalâh.

⁵⁴ Muhammad Ṣâliḥ al-Munajjid, *33 Ways of Developing Al-Khushoo‘: Humility and Devotion in Prayer* (Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2004), 13, 17.

⁵⁵ al-Munajjid, *33 Ways of Developing Al-Khushoo‘*, 14.

The situation is getting worse. As we become excessively pre-occupied with our worldly affairs, we are neglecting to learn more about our ṣalâh and how we can improve and perfect it and thereby derive joy from our prayers. Our ṣalâh is superficial, comprising mechanical rituals, movements, and words that avail us nothing. This is to the extent that there will come a time when one will enter a mosque and find not even a single person with khushoo‘, even though the mosque is full of worshippers. The following is a very relevant hadith in this regard:

Jubayr ibn Nufayr narrated from Abu ad-Dardâ’, who said:

«We were with the Prophet (ﷺ) when he raised his gaze to the sky. Then he said: This is the time when knowledge is to be taken from the people until what remains of it shall not amount to anything.

Ziyâd ibn Labeed al-Anṣâri asked: How will it be taken from us, while we recite the Qur’an? By Allah, we recite it and our women and children recite it.

He said: May you be bereaved of your mother, O Ziyâd! I used to consider you to be among the juristic scholars of the people of Madinah. The Torah and the Gospel are with the Jews and the Christians, but what do they avail of them?

Jubayr said: I met ‘Ubâdah ibn aṣ-Ṣâmit and said to him: Have you not heard what your brother, Abu ad-Dardâ’, said? I informed him of what Abu ad-Dardâ’ had said. He said: Abu ad-Dardâ’ spoke the truth. If you wish, I will narrate to you about the first knowledge to be removed from people: It is khushoo‘; soon you will enter the mosque but not see any man with khushoo‘.» (A sound hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)

The following words of Ibn al-Qayyim are also pertinent in this regard:

The Companion of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), Hudhayfah said: The first thing you will lose of your religion is khushoo‘, and the last thing you will lose of your religion is ṣalâh. There may be a person praying, who has no goodness in him, and soon you will enter a mosque and find no one who has khushoo‘.⁵⁶

Negligence of *khushoo‘* in ṣalâh

Being negligent about or during ṣalâh is a serious matter that may lead one to hypocrisy and may incur a severe punishment from Allah (ﷻ). There is a strong rebuke and admonishment in the following verses:

﴿أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالْإِيمَانِ ﴿١﴾ فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ ﴿٢﴾ وَلَا يُحِضُّ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ ﴿٣﴾ فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ ﴿٤﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهُونَ ﴿٥﴾﴾

(سورة الماعون: ١-٥)

«Have you seen the one who denies the recompense? It is he who drives away the orphan and does not encourage the feeding of the poor. So woe to those who pray [but] are heedless of their prayer.»

(Qur'an 107: 1-5)

Some scholars have understood heedlessness about ṣalâh to indicate the following: not performing the ṣalâh at its appointed times, missing the ṣalâh, or abandoning the ṣalâh altogether. Others have said that it means not being attentive and focused during the ṣalâh itself. In other words, individuals stand up for ṣalâh but perform it negligently, just to fulfil the ritual and duty of the obligatory prayers. In reality, they do not know the meaning of what

⁵⁶ Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyah, *Madârij as-Sâlikeen* (Egypt: al-Hay'at al-Miṣriyat al-‘Āmma lil-Kitâb, 1980), 1:521. Quoted in al-Munajjid, *33 Ways of Developing Al-Khushoo‘*, 13.

they are uttering in the ṣalâh. Perhaps what combines all these views and clarifies the true meaning of heedlessness about the ṣalâh is the following hadith:

«It was narrated from al-A‘lâ ibn ‘Abdur-Raḥmân that (one day) when he had finished dhuhr, he visited Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) in his house in Basra. His house was beside the mosque. (He said:) When we went to him, Anas asked: Have you prayed ‘aṣr?

We replied: We have just finished dhuhr.

He instructed: Pray ‘aṣr.

We stood up and prayed, and when we had finished, he said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: That is the prayer of the hypocrite. He sits watching the sun; then when it is between the horns of Satan, he stands up and pecks out four units in which he remembers Allah only a little.» (Recorded by Muslim and Abu Dâwood)

The virtues of khushoo‘

Knowing the importance and virtues of khushoo‘ in ṣalâh is a great motivational factor in helping worshippers put more effort into focusing and concentrating in ṣalâh. Indeed, khushoo‘ in prayer, as we said at the beginning of this chapter, happens when people empty their hearts and minds of everything else for the ṣalâh. They focus on it to the exclusion of everything else and prefer it over everything else. Only then are they able to derive joy and happiness from ṣalâh. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«...and my joy has been made in ṣalâh.» (A sound hadith recorded by Aḥmad)

Some of the many virtues of khushoo‘ in ṣalâh are as follows.

Allah has promised the men and women who are humbly submissive to Him in ṣalâh that their sins will be forgiven and that a great reward will be bestowed on them in paradise. (See *Qur'an* 33: 35)

Similarly, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) promised Allah's forgiveness and paradise to those who pray with khushoo', as long as they keep away from major sins such as fornication, adultery, using intoxicants, taking usury, going to magicians and sorcerers, disobeying parents, theft, and the like.

Is-hâq ibn Sa'eed ibn 'Âmir ibn Sa'eed ibn al-'Âş narrated:

«My father told me that his father said: I was with 'Uthmân and he called for water for purification. He said: I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: When the time for a prescribed prayer comes, if any Muslim performs ablution well and offers his prayer with humility and bowing, it will be an expiation for his past sins, as long as he has not committed a major sin. This applies for all times.» (Muslim)

It was narrated that 'Uqbah ibn 'Âmir al-Juhani reported the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) as saying:

«Whoever performs ablution and does it well, and then prays two units in which his heart and face are focused, paradise will be his.» (A reliable hadith recorded by an-Nasâ'i)

Khushoo' in ṣalâh is a means of coming closer to Allah (ﷻ). Indeed, when people focus during ṣalâh, reflecting and pondering only upon what they are uttering and doing, this will definitely increase their consciousness of their Lord. Thus, it will make them come closer to their Lord to the extent that they will pray as if they are seeing Allah (ﷻ).

The Prophet (ﷺ) advised Abu Ayyoob (رضي الله عنه) as follows:

«Pray the ṣalâh of the one who is bidding farewell, as if you were seeing Him (Allah). You may not see Him; yet He cer-

tainly sees you.» (Recorded by Aḥmad and authenticated by al-Albâni)

Ṣalâh is truly one of the greatest ways of remembering and glorifying Allah (ﷻ). Hence, it should be a source of joy and happiness, rather than a burden, in one's life. Allah has described:

﴿الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَتَطْمَئِنُّ قُلُوبُهُمْ بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ أَلَا بِذِكْرِ اللَّهِ تَطْمَئِنُّ الْقُلُوبُ﴾

(سورة الرعد: ٢٨)



«Those who believe and whose hearts find tranquillity in the remembrance of Allah. Verily, in the remembrance of Allah do hearts find tranquillity.» (Qur'an 13: 28)

The entire ṣalâh is a supplication and remembrance of Allah.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) would instruct Bilâl (رضي الله عنه), saying:

«O Bilâl! Call the iqâmah for the ṣalâh, so that we may find comfort in it (prayer).» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

It was narrated from Anas (رضي الله عنه) that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«In this world, women and perfume have been made dear to me, and my comfort (coolness of my eyes) has been provided in prayer.» (Recorded by Aḥmad and an-Nasâ'i with a reliable chain of narrators)

This means that the Prophet's genuine pleasure and contentment resided in the ṣalâh. It is a state of being that is virtually impossible to derive even from one's spouse or from the best of perfumes. The reason is that ṣalâh is a rational, physical, and devotional act of worship in which a person is in direct communion with the Lord of the universe, Who is the Beloved of all. The glorification, praise, and remembrance of the Beloved is far superior to everything in this world.

How to develop and maintain *khushoo'*

To develop *khushoo'* in our ṣalâh, it is fundamental that we gain the basic knowledge about Islam, especially that which will strengthen and increase our faith, and the knowledge of exactly how the Prophet (ﷺ) performed the ṣalâh. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) expressly said:

«Pray as you have seen me pray.» (Bukhari)

Since Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) is not physically present with us today, we can only get to know exactly how he performed the ṣalâh by studying his authentic guidance, otherwise known as the Hadith and Sunnah.

Secondly, Shaykh al-Munajjid quotes *Shaykh al-Islâm*⁵⁷ Ibn Taymiyah, who states that the things that help us develop *khushoo'* in ṣalâh can be classified into two main categories:

1. Doing the things that help one to develop and strengthen the *khushoo'*, and
2. Warding off all those things that distract us and affect our concentration, thereby reducing our *khushoo'*.

He further specifies the things that will help one to develop and increase *khushoo'*. These include, among others:

1. Focusing on what we are saying and doing in our ṣalâh
2. Pondering over the meanings of the Qur'anic recitation, the words of remembrance and glorification of Allah, and the various forms of supplications and invocations, and keeping in mind that we are standing in front of Allah the Almighty, directly communicating with Him. Even though

⁵⁷ Shaykh al-Islâm: an honorific title indicating an individual's authority in Islamic issues.

we cannot see Him, He is constantly observing how sincere, humble, submissive, and devoted we are in our ṣalâh.⁵⁸

On the other hand, warding off the things that distract us and affect our concentration means rejecting all the thoughts which keep one's mind off the purpose of the ṣalâh. These include doubts, insinuations from Satan, and worldly desires that distract one from the ṣalâh.⁵⁹

Shaykh al-Munajjid has further discussed in detail thirty-three different ways of developing and maintaining khushoo‘ in ṣalâh. Included among the many things he mentions are:

1. Preparing ourselves properly for the ṣalâh
2. Moving at a steady and measured pace during ṣalâh
3. Remembering death during ṣalâh
4. Pondering over the meaning of various verses, words of remembrance, and glorification of Allah and interacting with them, knowing that Allah responds to our ṣalâh

It is beyond the scope of this book to discuss all the means of developing khushoo‘, especially when a scholar of the calibre of Shaykh al-Munajjid has done a wonderful job on the subject. One only needs to refer to his book for all the details on how to develop khushoo‘ in ṣalâh.

Another great scholar, Husayn al-Awaayishah, also discusses in some detail nine ways of developing khushoo‘ in ṣalâh in *The Prayer: Its Effect in Increasing Eemaan and Purifying The Soul*. These include:

1. Remembering death while performing ṣalâh
2. Reflecting on the meanings of the words which one says in the ṣalâh

⁵⁸ al-Munajjid, *33 Ways of Developing Al-Khushoo‘*, 22.

⁵⁹ al-Munajjid, *33 Ways of Developing Al-Khushoo‘*, 23.

3. Abandoning sins
4. Avoiding excessive laughter since it kills the heart and empties it of humility
5. Choosing suitable work that will neither distract you from nor make you abandon the ṣalâh
6. Avoiding too much preoccupation with worldly affairs
7. Frequently reciting the noble Qur'an with understanding
8. Coming to the ṣalâh ahead of time so as to get other benefits of voluntary ṣalâh and words of invocation
9. Straightening the rows and standing closely together in prayer.⁶⁰

Shaykh Bilal Philips suggests the following means of attaining khushoo' in the second book of his famous series, entitled *Islamic Studies*:

1. Having sincere feelings of gratitude for the many blessings that Allah has bestowed on us, while feeling obligated to share them with the needy in society
2. Reflectively scanning our intentions and deeds with a sincerely remorseful heart that is ready to admit its shortcomings and errors
3. Remembering the distasteful reality about the end of this temporary world and facing our Lord on the Day of Reckoning, with its just rewards and painful, terrible punishments
4. Doing our best to follow the beautiful pattern of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and his Companions in everything we do

⁶⁰ Husayn al-Awaayishah, *The Prayer: Its Effect in Increasing Eemaan and Purifying the Soul* (Birmingham: Al-Hidaayah Publishing and Distribution Ltd., 1995), 14-22.

5. Trying to fortify our faith with remembrance of Allah through voluntary prayers, regular recitation of the Qur’an, and all forms of praise and glorifications that keep Satan at bay.⁶¹

In brief, in order to fulfil the seventh condition of ṣalâh, we ought to know exactly what we are doing and saying in our ṣalâh from the beginning to the end. We have to strive to ward off all forms of distractions such as looking upwards to the sky or at our watches, overtly fidgeting, and letting our mobile phones ring while we are in ṣalâh.⁶² We have to realize that we are standing in front of Allah (ﷻ), worshipping Him and praying to Him. Allah, in turn, is directly watching us and observing how sincerely and seriously we are praying.

«It was narrated from al-A‘lâ ibn ‘Abdur-Raḥmân, from his father, from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

If someone offers ṣalâh and does not recite the essence of the Qur’an (Soorat al-Fâtiḥah), it is deficient. He repeated this three times.

It was said to Abu Hurayrah: We are behind the imam.

He said: Recite it to yourself, for I heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say that Allah Most High says: I have divided ṣalâh in half between Myself and My slave. My slave will have that for which he asks.

The slave says: *Al-ḥamdu lillâhi rabbil-‘âlameen* (All the praises and thanks be to Allah, Lord of the worlds).

Allah says: My slave has praised Me.

He says: *Ar-Raḥmân ir-Raḥeem* (The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful).

Allah says: My slave has extolled Me.

⁶¹ Philips, *Islamic Studies Book 2*, 179.

⁶² al-Awaayishah, *The Prayer*, 78-81.

He says: *Mâliki yawm id-deen* (the only Owner and the only Ruling Judge of the Day of Recompense).

Allah says: My slave has glorified Me.

On one occasion, He said: My slave has entrusted his affairs to Me.

He says: *Iyyâka na 'budu wa iyyâka nasta 'een* (You alone we worship and You alone we ask for help for each and every thing).

Allah says: This is between My slave and Me, and he will have what he asked for.

He says: *Ihdinaş-şirât al-mustaqeem, şirât alladheena an 'amta 'alayhim, ghayril-maghđoobi 'alayhim wa lađ-đâlleen* (Guide us to the straight path, the path of those on whom You have bestowed Your grace, not [the path] of those who earned Your anger nor of those who go astray).

Allah says: All these are for My slave, and he will have all that for which he asked.» (Muslim)

Shaykh al-Munajjid has commented on the importance of this hadith, saying that if praying individuals constantly keep it in mind whilst performing their şalâh, especially during the recitation of Soorat al-Fâtiḥah, they would attain immense khushoo'. The impact of reciting only al-Fâtiḥah a minimum of seventeen times a day would be great and visible in one's life. How else could it be if we constantly feel in our şalâh that Allah is continuously watching us, addressing us, and giving us all we ask Him?⁶³

Furthermore, al-Munajjid concludes, "This 'conversation' with Allah must be respected and accorded its proper value."⁶⁴ This is because Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

⁶³ al-Munajjid, *33 Ways of Developing Al-Khushoo'*, 40.

⁶⁴ al-Munajjid, *33 Ways of Developing Al-Khushoo'*, 40.

«When any of you stands to pray, he is conversing with his Lord; so let him pay attention to how he speaks to Him.» (A sound hadith recorded by al-Ḥâkim)⁶⁵

It is also worth knowing that khushoo‘ is an action of the heart that may increase or decrease depending on one’s effort. Thus, people are at various levels and degrees of khushoo‘; some have khushoo‘ as great as the clouds of the sky while others may finish their prayers without an iota of it. The latter do not understand or gain anything at all from their ṣalâh.

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) used to invoke and supplicate to Allah with the following words:

«Allâhumma innee a‘oodhubika min ‘ilmin lâ yanfa‘u wa min qalbin lâ yakhsha‘u wa min nafsîn lâ tashba‘u wa min du‘â’in lâ yusma‘u.

(O Allah! I seek your refuge from knowledge that is of no benefit, from a heart that does not fear, from a soul that is never satisfied, and from a supplication that is not heard).»

(A reliable hadith recorded by an-Nasâ’i)

⁶⁵ Quoted in al-Munajjid, *33 Ways of Developing Al-Khushoo‘*, 40.

Chapter Thirteen

Pictorial description of the ṣalâh

The following is the way Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) performed ṣalâh. He ordered his Companions and those who would come after him to do the same, saying: «Pray as you have seen me pray.» (Bukhari)

The call to prayer (*adhân*) and its origin

When the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions migrated to Madinah and finished building the mosque that later became well-known as the Prophet's Mosque, the question remained as to how people would be summoned for ṣalâh. Various suggestions were given by the Companions as narrated in authentic hadiths, some of which are as follows:

Narrated Anas (رضي الله عنه): The people mentioned the fire and the bell [they suggested those as signals to indicate the time to offer ṣalâh], but this was similar to the practices of the Jews and the Christians. Then Bilâl (رضي الله عنه) was ordered to pronounce the adhân for the ṣalâh by saying its wordings twice and the iqâmah by saying its wordings once. [Iqâmah is pronounced when the people are ready for ṣalâh].⁶⁶

⁶⁶ al-Munajjid, 33 *Ways of Developing Al-Khushoo'*, 355.

«‘Abdullâh ibn Zayd narrated: When we awoke, we went to Allah’s Messenger to inform him of the dream.

He said: Indeed, this dream is true. Go to Bilâl, for he has a better and louder voice than you. Convey to him what was said to you, so that he may call (to the prayer) with that.

He said: When ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb heard Bilâl calling for the ṣalâh, he went to Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ), dragging his lower garment in his hurry, saying: O Allah’s Messenger! By the One Who sent you with the truth! I dreamt the same as what he said.

He said: Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: To Allah is the praise; that confirms it even more.» (A reliable hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)

It was narrated from Abu Muḥdhoorah that the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) taught him this adhân:

«Allâhu akbar Allâhu akbar

(Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest) — twice

Ash-hadu al lâ ilâha illâ Allâh

(I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah alone) — twice

Ash-hadu annâ Muḥammadar-rasoolullâh

(I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah) — twice

Ḥayyâ ‘alaṣ-ṣalâh

(Come to prayer) — twice

Ḥayyâ ‘alal-falâh

(Come to success and prosperity) — twice

Allâhu akbar Allâhu akbar

(Allah is the Greatest, Allah is the Greatest) — once

Lâ ilâha illâ Allâh

(None has the right to be worshipped but Allah) — once.»
(Muslim)

The adhân, its virtues, and what to say after it

Satan, the greatest enemy of humanity, runs away when the adhân is pronounced. He returns after the adhân and the iqâmah, though, to interfere and distract us from our ṣalâh.

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: «When the adhân is pronounced, Satan takes to his heels. He passes wind with noise during his flight in order not to hear the adhân. When the adhân is completed he returns, but again takes to his heels when the iqâmah is pronounced. After its completion, he returns again until he whispers into the heart of the person (to divert attention from the ṣalâh) and makes him recall things which he had not remembered before his ṣalâh. Thus, he causes him to forget how much he has prayed.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) recommended that the adhân should be answered while it is being called. The one who is listening to it should reply by repeating after the caller his exact words, except that when he says: *ḥayyâ 'alaṣ-ṣalâh* (come to prayer) and *ḥayyâ 'alal-falâḥ* (come to success), one should reply: *lâ ḥawlâ walâ quwwatâ illâ billâh* (there is neither might nor power except with Allah). (Bukhari)

It was narrated by Jâbir ibn 'Abdullâh (رضي الله عنه) that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Whoever, after listening to the adhân, says:

Allâhumma rabbâ hâdhihid-da'watit-tâmati waş-şalâtil qâ'imah, âti Muḥammadan il-waseelata wal-faḍelah, wab'aththu maqâmam maḥmoodan il-ladhee wa'adah.

(O Allah! Lord of this perfect call [of not ascribing partners to You] and of the regular ṣalâh which is going to be established! Kindly give Muhammad the position of intercession on the Day of Judgement and an extra degree of honour, and raise him to a station of praise and glory [the honour of intercession on the Day of Judgement] which You have promised him.)

— intercession from me will be permitted for him on the Day of Resurrection.» (Bukhari)

Step 1: Saying the opening Allâhu akbar



The Prophet (ﷺ) used to begin his prayer by raising his hands and saying *Allâhu akbar* (Allah is the Greatest) as demonstrated in the picture above. The Prophet (ﷺ) would sometimes raise his hands at the same time he made the takbeer, sometimes before the takbeer and sometimes after it. (Bukhari and Muslim)

He used to raise them with his fingers straight, neither spreading them out widely nor clamping them together,⁶⁷ up to the level of his shoulders. Sometimes they were parallel to his shoulders, and sometimes they went up to the level of his ears. (Muslim)

Step 2: Standing



Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) would place his right hand on his left, holding both hands on his chest. He ordered the same, saying:

⁶⁷ A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood and at-Tirmidhi.

«Verily, we prophets have been ordered... to place our right hands on our left in ṣalâh.» (Recorded by Ibn Ḥibbân with a sound chain of narration, which is in accordance with the conditions of Imam Muslim)

Sahl ibn Sa'd (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«The people were ordered to place the right hand on the left forearm in ṣalâh.

Abu Ḥâzim said: I knew that the order was from the Prophet (ﷺ).» (Bukhari)

«Abu 'Uthmân an-Nahdi narrated from Ibn Mas'ood that he prayed with his left hand over his right. The Prophet (ﷺ) saw him and placed his right hand over his left.» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

It was reported from Sulaymân ibn Moosâ from Ṭâwoos, who said:

«The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to place his right hand on his left hand, then grasp both of them on his chest while he was praying.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

In this standing position known as the *qiyâm*, the Prophet (ﷺ) would recite and also recommended the recitation of various forms of opening supplications and invocations prior to reciting the first chapter of the noble Qur'an, al-Fâtiḥah. Following are four of the opening supplications:

It was narrated that 'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) said:

«Whenever the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would start the prayer, he would say:

Subḥânaka Allâhumma wa biḥamdik, wa tabâarak asmuk, wa ta'âlâ jadduk, wa lâ ilâhâ ghayruk.

(Glorious You are, O Allah, and with all praises and thanks, and blessed is Your name, and exalted is Your majesty, and none has the right to be worshipped but You alone.)» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

It was narrated that Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) said:

«While we were praying with the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ), a man among the people said:

Allâhu akbar kabeera, wal-ḥamdu lillâhi katheera, wa subḥân Allâhi bukratan wa aṣeela.

(Allah is the greatest, much praise and thanks be to Allah, glory be to Allah morning and evening.)

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) asked: Who said such-and-such?

A man replied: I did, O Messenger of Allah.

He said: I was impressed by it, for the gates of paradise were opened for it.» (Muslim)

Narrated al-Barâ’:

«Whenever we offered ṣalâh with the Prophet (ﷺ), he would pause between the takbeer and the recitation (Soorat al-Fâtihah), and that interval of silence used to be a short one. I said to the Prophet (ﷺ): May my parents be sacrificed for you! What do you say in the pause between the takbeer and the recitation?

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: I say:

Allâhumma bâ‘id bayni wa bayna khaṭâyâya kamâ bâ‘adta bayn al-mashriqi wal-maghrib. Allâhumma naqqini min al-khaṭâyâ kamâ yunaqqath-thawbul-abyaḍu min ad-danas. Allâhumma aghsil khaṭâyâya bil-mâ’i wath-thalji wal-barad.

(O Allah! Set me apart from my sins as east and west are set apart from each other and clean me from sins as a white

garment is cleaned of dirt. O Allah! Wash off my sins with water, snow, and hail.)» (Bukhari)

‘Ali ibn Abi Tâlib (عليه السلام) narrated:

«When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) used to stand up to pray, he would say the takbeer then recite:

Wajjahtu wajhiya lilladhi faṭaras-samâwâti wal-arḍa ḥaneefan, wa mâ anâ min al-mushrikeen. Innâṣ-ṣalâti wa nusuki wa maḥyâya wa mamâtee lillâhi rabb il-‘âlameen, lâ shareeka lah, wa bi thalika amootu wa anâ min al-muslimeen.

Allâhumma! Antal-malik. Lâ ilâha illâ ant. Anta rabbi, wa anâ ‘abduk. Dhalamtu nafsee, wa ‘tarafu bi-dhambi faghfirli dhunoobi jamee ‘an, lâ yaghfir udh-dhunooba illâ ant. Wahdini li-aḥsanil-akhlâq, lâ yahdi li-aḥsanihâ illâ ant, lâ yaṣrif ‘anni see’aha illâ ant. Labbayka wa sa‘dayk, wal-khayru kulluhu fee yadayka, wash-sharru laysa ilayk, anâ bika wa ilayk, tabârakta wa ta‘âlayt, astaghfiruka wa atooibu ilayk.

(I have turned my face to the One who originated the heavens and the earth, turning [myself solely to Him], and I am not among those who associate partners [with Him]. Verily, my prayer, and rites, and life, and death, all belong to Allah, the Lord of the creation — He has no partners. And this is what I have been commanded with, and I am the first to submit myself [to Him].

O Allah, You are the King; there is no deity worthy of worship except You. You are my Lord, and I am Your slave. I have wronged myself and admit to my sin, so forgive all my sins; none forgives sins except You. And guide me to the best conduct; none guides to the best of them except You. And turn away from me the evil of it [conduct and man-

ners]; none can turn away the evil of it except You. I am at Your service and at Your call at all times. All good is in Your Hands and evil is not attributed to You. My [help and success] is with You and upon You. You are exalted and glorified. I seek Your forgiveness and repent to You.)» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

After this, Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) would seek Allah's refuge from the accursed Satan before beginning his recitation of the Qur'an.

Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«Whenever Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) stood for ṣalâh during the night, he would say the takbeer and then recite:

Subhânaka Allâhumma wa biḥamdik, wa tabâarak-asmuk, wa ta'âla jadduk, wa lâ ilâha ghayruk.

(Glorious You are, O Allah, and with all praises and thanks, and blessed is Your name, and exalted is Your majesty, and none has the right to be worshipped but You alone.)

Then he would say: *Allâhu akbar kabeerâ.*

(Allah is undoubtedly the Greatest).

Then he would say: *A'oodhu billâhi as-samee'il-'aleemi min ash-shayṭânir-rajeemi, min ḥamzihi wa nafkhihi wa nafthih.*

(I seek refuge in Allah, the All-Hearing, the All-Knowing, from the cursed Satan, from his madness, his arrogance, and his poetry.)» (A reliable hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)

Immediately after seeking Allah's refuge from Satan, the Prophet (ﷺ) would recite Soorat al-Fâtihah at a moderate speed, neither too slow nor too fast, distinctly separating each verse without combining two verses together. This was in order to help in the reflection and understanding of the soorah.

It was narrated from Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) that she described how the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) would recite:

«*Bismillâh ir-Raḥmân ir-Raḥeem.*

(In the name of Allah, the entirely Beneficent, the especially Merciful).

Alḥamdu lillâhi rabbil- ‘âlameen.

(All the praises and thanks be to Allah, Lord of the worlds).

Ar-Raḥmân ir-Raḥeem.

(The Most Gracious, the Most Merciful).

Mâliki yawm-ideen.

(Owner of the Day of Recompense).

He [the Prophet (ﷺ)] recited each verse separately, pausing at the end of each verse without joining them with each other (until the end of the soorah).

Iyyâka na ‘budu wa iyyâka nasta ‘een.

(You alone we worship and You alone we ask for help for each and every thing).

Ihdinaş-şirâṭ al-mustaqeem.

(Guide us to the straight path).

Şirâṭ alladheena an ‘amta ‘alayhim, ghayril-maghḍoobi ‘alayhim wa laḍ-ḍâlleen.

(The path of those on whom You have bestowed Your grace, not [the path] of those who earned Your anger nor of those who go astray).» (Recorded by Abu Dâwood and at-Tirmidhi)⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Even though some scholars of Hadith have declared this hadith to be weak, al-Albâni and others — including adh-Dhahabi, al-Khuzaymah, an-Nawawi, and al-Ḥâkim — have authenticated it.

At the end of this soorah, it was the Prophet's practice to say *âmeen* (may Allah accept it) aloud. He ordered his Companions to do the same, as narrated in the following hadith:

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Say *âmeen* when the imam says it (at the end of al-Fâtiḥah). If the *âmeen* of any of you coincides with that of the angels, then all his past sins will be forgiven.

Ibn Shihâb said: Allah's Messenger used to say *âmeen*.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

After completing the recitation of Soorat al-Fâtiḥah in the first two units of ṣalâh, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) would recite another soorah or part of a soorah. Sometimes he would recite more than one soorah in one unit. (For other short soorahs to be recited in ṣalâh, see Appendix I.)

‘Abdullâh ibn Abi Qatâdah narrated:

«My father said: The Prophet (ﷺ) used to recite Soorat al-Fâtiḥah followed by another soorah in the first two units of ṣalâh. He used to recite only Soorat al-Fâtiḥah in the last two units of dhuhr ṣalâh. Sometimes a verse or so was audible, and he used to prolong the first unit more than the second. He used to do the same in ‘aṣr and fajr ṣalâh.» (Bukhari)

It was narrated that Abu Qatâdah said:

«Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) used to lead our ṣalâh, and he would recite the opening of the book (al-Fâtiḥah) and two (other) soorahs in dhuhr and ‘aṣr and let us hear a verse sometimes. He used to make the first unit lengthy in dhuhr and the second unit short. He did likewise in aṣ-ṣubḥ (fajr prayer).» (Muslim)

Soorat al-Fâtiḥah is so important that it is the minimum obligatory soorah to be recited by the praying person in every unit.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) has emphasized that the ṣalâh of the one who does not recite it will not be valid.

‘Ubâdah ibn aṣ-Ṣâmit (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«There is no ṣalâh for the one who does not recite the opening of the Book (al-Fâtiḥah).» (Bukhari and Muslim)

However, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) has given a concession to those who have just embraced Islam and are still struggling to learn their ṣalâh. They can recite some other words or short soorahs until they have memorized al-Fâtiḥah, as reported in the following hadith:

‘Abdullâh ibn Abi Awfâ narrated:

«A man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: I cannot seem to memorize anything from the Qur'an, so teach me what will suffice me of it.

He replied: Say:

Subhân Allâh, wal-ḥamdu lillâh, wa lâ ilâha illâ Allâh, wallâhu Akbar, wa lâ ḥawla wa lâ quwwata illâ billâ hîl-‘aliyyil-‘adheem.

(Glory be to Allah, and all praise be to Allah, and none has the right to be worshipped but Allah, and Allah is the Most Great, and there is no might nor power [to do anything] except with Allah, the All-High, the Almighty).

The man said: O Messenger of Allah, this is all for Allah, what is there for me?

He said: Say:

Allâhumma arḥamni warzuqni wa ‘âfini wahdini.

(O Allah! Have mercy on me, and provide me sustenance, and protect me, and guide me).

When the man stood up (to leave), he motioned with his two hands [as if he were taking something from the Prophet (ﷺ)].

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: This person has indeed filled his hand with good.» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

Step 3: Bowing (*rukoo'*)



After Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) finished reciting Soorat al-Fâtiḥah and another soorah or part of a soorah, he would pause very briefly.⁶⁹ Then he would raise his hands to the same level as

⁶⁹ A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood.

he did at the beginning of the ṣalâh.⁷⁰ He would then pronounce the takbeer (‘Allâhu akbar’) and bow down to perform rukoo‘ as demonstrated in the picture above. The Prophet (ﷺ) would place his palms on his knees firmly, as if grabbing them, and spread his fingers apart. His back would be straight and parallel to the ground. His head would neither be bent upwards nor downwards but in between.⁷¹ The Prophet (ﷺ) further emphasized that one should not do the rukoo‘ and *sujood* (prostration) hurriedly during ṣalâh; rather, one should bow calmly until one feels at ease. (Bukhari)

Abu Qatâdah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«The worst type of thief is the one who steals from his ṣalâh. He asked: O Messenger of Allah, how can a person steal from his ṣalâh?

The Prophet (ﷺ) answered: By not bowing or prostrating properly.» (Recorded by Aḥmad and al-Ḥâkim; authenticated by al-Albâni)

It was reported from ‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها), Mother of the Believers:

«When the Prophet (ﷺ) entered the Kaaba, his eyes never left the place of his prostration until he came out again.» (Recorded by al-Ḥâkim, and authenticated by adh-Dhahabi and al-Albâni)⁷²

While bowing, the Prophet (ﷺ) used to recite three times:

«*Subḥâna rabbiyal-‘adheem*.

(Glorified and exalted is my Lord, the Magnificent, above all imperfections attributed to Him).» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

He also taught the following invocations to be recited three times in each rukoo‘:

⁷⁰ Bukhari and Muslim.

⁷¹ Bukhari and Abu Dâwood.

⁷² Quoted in al-Munajjid, *33 Ways of Developing Al-Khushoo‘*, 43.

«*Subhâna rabbiyal-‘adheem wa biḥamdih.*

(Glorified and exalted is my Lord, the Magnificent, above all imperfections attributed to Him and may He be praised.)»

(A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

«*Subboohun quddoosun rabbul-malâ’ikati war-rooh.*

([My prostration is only to] the Exalted, the Holy, Lord of the angels and the spirit.)» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu

Dâwood)

Step 4: Standing up after *rukoo’*



Straightening up after bowing, the Prophet (ﷺ) would raise his hands to the same position as he did at the beginning of ṣalâh and say:

«Samee ‘ Allâhu liman ḥamidah.

(Allah hears the one who praises and thanks Him).» (Bukhari and Muslim)

When his body was straight and upright, he would lower his hands or put them back on his chest saying:

«Rabbanâ wa lak al-ḥamd.

(O our Lord, to You belongs all praises and gratitude).» (Bukhari and Muslim)

«It was narrated from Mâlik ibn al-Huwayrith that he saw the Prophet (ﷺ) raise his hands when he raised his head from bowing until they were level with the highest part of his ears.» (A sound hadith recorded by an-Nasâ’i)

Abu Ḥumayd said:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) rose (from bowing) and stood straight until all the bones of his spinal column came back to a natural position.» (Bukhari)

(This has been illustrated in the picture.)

Narrated Thâbit:

«Anas (رضي الله عنه) used to demonstrate to us the ṣalâh of the Prophet (ﷺ). While demonstrating, he used to raise his head from bowing and stand for so long that we would think that he had forgotten (the prostration).» (Bukhari)

From this upright standing position and after finishing his invocations, the Prophet (ﷺ) would make the takbeer (‘Allâhu akbar’) and go into prostration. (Bukhari)

He described the way of prostrating as follows:

«When one of you prostrates, let him not kneel as the camel kneels, and let him place his hands (on the ground) before his knees.» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

Step 5: Prostrating (*sujood*)



As illustrated in the picture, when the Prophet (ﷺ) prostrated, he would place his nose and forehead flat on the ground, holding his forearms away from his sides, which were raised off the ground. His hands would be level with his shoulders.⁷³ His palms would be firmly placed flat on the ground parallel to his ears,⁷⁴ and his fingers would be closed together, pointing towards the qibla.⁷⁵ While prostrating, the Prophet (ﷺ) made a gap between his thighs without allowing his chest or stomach to touch them. He further ensured that his heels were together and his toes firmly planted on the ground, also pointing towards the qibla. (Bukhari and Abu Dâwood)

Ibn Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

⁷³ A sound hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi and Abu Dâwood.

⁷⁴ A sound hadith recorded by an-Nasâ'i.

⁷⁵ A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood.

«I have been ordered to prostrate on seven bones: that is, on the forehead along with the tip of the nose. (The Prophet (ﷺ) pointed towards his nose, both hands, both knees, and the toes of both feet.) (I have also been told) not to gather the clothes⁷⁶ or the hair.» (Bukhari)

Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Be straight in the prostrations. None of you should put his forearms on the ground (during prostration) like a dog.» (Bukhari and Abu Dâwood)

As with the other postures in prayer, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) used to make a variety of invocations while prostrating, and he taught us to do the same. Some of them are as follows:

«*Subhâna rabbiyal-a 'lâ.*

(Glorified and exalted is my Lord, the Most High, above all imperfections attributed to Him).» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

«*Subhâna rabbiyal-a 'lâ wa bihamdih.*

(Glorified and exalted is my Lord, the Most High, above all imperfections attributed to Him, and may He be praised).» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

«*Subboohun quddoosun rabbul-malâ 'ikati war-rooh.*

([My prostration is only to] the Exalted, the Holy, Lord of the angels and the spirit).» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) forbade the recitation of the Qur'an during both bowing and prostration. He, however, greatly encour-

⁷⁶ Muhammad Muhsin Khan, translator of *Sahih al-Bukhari*, comments on this hadith: While performing the prayers one should not engage in arranging his clothes or removing his hair from his forehead. He should devote himself to the ṣalâh with submissiveness.

aged recitation of invocations and supplications seeking Allah's mercy, grace, and forgiveness. He said:

«While in prostration, strive in supplication, for it deserves a response (from your Lord).» (Muslim and Abu Dâwood)

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«The closest that a person is to his Lord is when he is prostrating, so supplicate a great deal.» (Muslim and Abu Dâwood)

Step 6: Sitting between two prostrations





After completing the invocations of prostration, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) would raise his head while reciting the takbeer. However, he would not raise his hands between the two prostrations⁷⁷ when he sat up, as illustrated in the picture.⁷⁸ The most common sitting between the two prostrations was such that the Prophet (ﷺ) would place his left foot horizontally (on the ground) and sit on the bottom part of it, while his right foot was propped

⁷⁷ Recorded by Abu Dâwood and an-Nasâ'i. The scholars of Hadith have declared the hadith in Abu Dâwood to be reliable and the hadith in an-Nasâ'i to be sound.

⁷⁸ A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood.

up straight with his toes pointing towards the qibla.⁷⁹ The Prophet (ﷺ), in this resting position between the two prostrations, would spend as much time as he had spent in prostration. (Bukhari)

During this short resting period between the two prostrations, the Prophet (ﷺ) used to make either of the following two supplications:

«*Rabbighfir lee, rabbighfir lee.*

(O Lord forgive me, O Lord forgive me).» (A sound hadith recorded by Ibn Mâjah and an-Nasâ'i)

«*Allâhumma-aghfirli warḥamni wa 'âfini wahdini warzuqni.*

(O Allah, forgive me, have mercy on me, protect me, guide me, and provide for me).» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

The Prophet (ﷺ) would then recite the takbeer and make a second prostration in the same form as the first one, supplicating in the same manner with similar invocations. Sometimes he would spend a longer time in the prostration.⁸⁰ After that, he would raise his head, recite the takbeer, and sit up — pausing very briefly⁸¹ — before supporting himself using his hands on the ground to stand up and start the second unit. The second unit is performed in exactly the same way as the first unit of prayer⁸² except that the opening supplications and invocations made before reciting soorat al-Fâtiḥah are omitted.

⁷⁹ Bukhari and Abu Dâwood.

⁸⁰ Bukhari.

⁸¹ The short sitting with a very short pause before standing for the second unit of prayer is known as *jalsat ul-istirâḥah*, literally meaning a sitting of rest and comfort.

⁸² Bukhari.

Step 7: Tashahhud



The *tashahhud* is what is said after the second prostration and again after the last prostration (if it is a prayer with more than two units). It includes the declaration of faith.

During the last posture of sitting, whether after the second prostration of the second unit of the fajr prayer, the third unit of the maghrib prayer, or the fourth unit of the *dhuhr*, 'aṣr, or 'ishâ prayer the Prophet (ﷺ) used to sit back in the *iftirâsh* position. He would lay his left foot on its side and sit on it, while making the right foot flexed and perpendicular to the ground, heel up, toes flat on the ground, tips pointing to the qibla,⁸³ as illustrated in the picture above.

Meanwhile, the Prophet (ﷺ) would place his right hand on his right thigh and raise his forefinger and supplicate with that finger raised and pointing toward the qibla. He would look at it or thereabouts,⁸⁴ and his left hand would be spread apart on his left knee. (Muslim)

‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ood, a Companion of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ), said:

«The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) taught me the tashahhud with my hand between his hands (just as he taught me a soorah from the Qur’an):

At-taḥiyâtu lillâhi waṣ-ṣalawâtu waṭ-ṭayyibât, as-salâmu ‘alayka ayyuhan-nabiyy⁸⁵ wa raḥmatullâhi wa barakâtuh.

⁸³ Bukhari.

⁸⁴ A sound hadith recorded by an-Nasâ’i.

⁸⁵ Some people note that Ibn Mas‘ood (رضي الله عنه) also narrated this form of the tashahhud: Before the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) died we used to say: al-salaamu ‘alayka ayyhu’l-nabiyyu (peace be upon you, O Prophet) but after he died we said: al-salaamu ‘ala al-nabi (peace be upon the Prophet)?... With regard to the report narrated from Ibn Mas‘ood (may Allaah be pleased with him) — if it is a saheeh (sound) narration from him — this is the ijtihaad of the one who did that and it does not=

As-salâmu ‘alaynâ wa ‘alâ ‘ibâd-illâhiş-şâliheen. Ash-hadu al lâ ilâha illâ Allâh wa ash-hadu annâ Muḥammadan ‘abduhu wa rasooluh.

(All the best compliments, prayers, and pure words are due to Allah. Peace be upon you, O Prophet, and mercy of Allah and His blessings. Peace be upon us and upon all the righteous slaves of Allah. I bear witness that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger).» (Bukhari and Muslim)

The Prophet (ﷺ) taught the Companions to send ṣalâh on him in a variety of forms after finishing the first tashahhud. The most common one has been narrated by Ibn Abi Laylâ, who said:

«Ka‘b ibn ‘Ujrah met me and said: Shall I not give you a gift? The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came out to us and we asked: We know what it means to send peace upon you, but what does it mean to send ṣalâh upon you?

He answered: Say:

Allâhummaṣalli ‘alâMuḥammadinwa ‘alâ âliMuḥammadin, kamâ ṣallayta ‘alâ Ibrâheema wa ‘alâ âli Ibrâheem. Innaka ḥameedum-majeed. Allâhumma bârik ‘âlâ Muḥammadin wa ‘alâ âli Muḥammadin, kamâ bârakta ‘alâ Ibrâheema wa ‘alâ âli Ibrâheem. Innaka ḥameedum-majeed.

(O Allah, send Your ṣalâh [grace, honour, and mercy] upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad, as You sent Your ṣalâh upon Abraham and the family of Abraham.

=contradict the proven ahaadeeth. If the ruling after the death of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allaah be upon him) were different than the ruling when he was still alive, he would have told us that. Quoted from Islam Q&A, “Do we say al-salaamu ‘alayka ayyuhul-nabiyyu or al-salaam ‘ala al-nabi in the tashahhud?” *Islam-QA.com*, <http://www.islam-qa.com/en/ref/34535/> tashahhud (accessed April 5, 2012).

You are indeed Praiseworthy, Most Glorious. O Allah, send Your blessings upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad, as You sent Your blessings upon Abraham and the family of Abraham. You are indeed Praiseworthy, Most Glorious.)» (Muslim)

After reciting the above ṣalâh, the Prophet (ﷺ) used to seek refuge from the various trials of this world and the hereafter and taught his Companions to do the same, just as he would teach them a soorah from the Qur'an. (Muslim)

One of the supplications for seeking refuge from the trials of this world and the hereafter is mentioned in the following hadith:

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

«When one of you says the tashahhud, let him seek refuge with Allah from four things. Let him say:

Allâhumma innee a 'oodhubika min 'adhâbi jahannama, wa min 'adhâb il-qabri, wa min fitnatil-mahyâ wal-mamâti wa min sharri fitnatil-maseeh id-Dajjâl.

(O Allah, I seek refuge with You from the punishment of hell, from the punishment of the grave, from the trials of life and death, and from the evil of the tribulations of the Dajjâl).» (Muslim)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) used to make a variety of supplications before closing the ṣalâh, and he encouraged his Companions to do the same; he even taught some specific supplications to some of his Companions. For instance:

Abu Bakr aş-Şiddeeq (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«I asked Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) to teach me an invocation so that I could invoke Allah in my ṣalâh. He told me to say:

Allâhumma innee dhalamtu nafsi dhulman katheerân, wa lâ yaghfir udh-dhunooba illâ anta faghfirli maghfiratan min 'indika war-ḥamni, innaka antal-ghafoor ur-raḥeem.

(O Allah, verily I have wronged myself with many wrongdoings, and none can forgive sins except You, so forgive me with Your forgiveness and have mercy on me. Verily You are the Most Forgiving, the Most Merciful.)» (Bukhari)

Step 8: Tasleem



After making as many supplications as he desired, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) would end the ṣalâh with the tasleem. He would turn his face to the right and then to the left, as illustrated in the picture above and reported by his Companions.

‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ood (رضي الله عنه) reported:

«The Prophet would say the tasleem on his right side and (then) on his left side — so much so that the whiteness of his cheeks could be seen. (He would say:) *Assalâmu ‘alay-kum wa raḥmatullâh* (peace be upon you, and the mercy

of Allah) while turning his cheek to the right side. Then he would turn his cheek to the left side while saying again: Assalamu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatullâh.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

Another way of making tasleem for ending the ṣalâh was reported by ‘Alqamah ibn Wâ’il, who reported that his father (Wâ’il ibn Ḥujr) said:

«I prayed with the Prophet, and he would say the tasleem on his right side (saying): *As-salâmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatullâhi wa barakâtuh* (peace be upon you, and the mercy of Allah, and His blessings), and on his left side (saying): *As-salâmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatullâh* (peace be upon you, and the mercy of Allah).» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

After giving the tasleem, the Prophet (ﷺ) would turn to face his Companions, seek Allah’s forgiveness three times, and make other supplications and invocations as reported by the Companions.

It was narrated that Thawbân said:

«When the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had finished his ṣalâh, he would ask for forgiveness three times, saying:

Astaghfir Allâh, astaghfir Allâh, astaghfir Allâh.

(I ask Allah for forgiveness, I ask Allah for forgiveness, I ask Allah for forgiveness.)

Then he would say:

Allâhumma antas-salâmu wa minkas-Salâm, tabârakta yâ dhal-jalâli wal-ikrâm.

(O Allah, You are *as-Salâm* [the Source of Peace Who is free from all defects and deficiencies] and from You is all peace, and blessed are You, Possessor of majesty and honour.)» (Muslim)

It was narrated that Warrâd, the freed slave of al-Mugheerah ibn Shu‘bah, said:

«Al-Mugheerah ibn Shu‘bah wrote to Mu‘âwiyah saying that when the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) had finished his ṣalâh and said the tasleem, he said:

Lâ ilâha illâ Allâhu waḥdahu lâ shareeka lah, lahul-mulku wa lahul-ḥamdu wa huwa ‘alâ kulli shay’in qadeer. Allâhumma lâ mâni‘a limâ a‘ṭayta, wa lâ mu‘ṭiya limâ man‘at, wa lâ yanfa‘u dhal-jaddi mink al-jadd.

(There is none worthy of worship but Allah alone, with no partner or associate. His is the dominion, to Him be the praise, and He is able to do all things [that befit his majesty]. O Allah, none can withhold what You give and none can give what You withhold, and the good fortune of any fortunate person is of no avail against You.)» (Muslim)

‘Ali ibn Abi Ṭâlib narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) would say after the tasleem:

«Allâhumma-aghfirlee mâ qaddamtu wa mâ akhkhart, wa mâ asrartu wa mâ a‘lant, wa mâ asraftu wa mâ anta a‘lamu bihi minnee, antal-muqaddimu wal-mu‘akh-khir, lâ ilâha illâ ant.

(O Allah! Forgive me for what I have done, and what I have yet to do, and what I have done in private, and what I have done in public, and all my excesses, and all that You know of me. You are the One Who brings forward and distances.)» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

It was reported from Abu ‘Abdur-Raḥmân al-Hubali, from as-Sunâbihi, from Mu‘âdh ibn Jabal (رضي الله عنه), that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) held his hand and said:

«O Mu‘âdh! I swear by Allah, I love you. I advise you, O Mu‘âdh, to say after every ṣalâh:

Allâhumma! A‘inni ‘alâ dhikrika wa shukrika wa ḥusni ‘ibâdatik.

(O Allah! Help me in remembering You, thanking You, and perfecting my worship of You).» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

«Whoever glorifies Allah (says *subḥân Allâh*) thirty-three times after every ṣalâh, and praises Allah (says *al-ḥamdulillâh*) thirty-three times, and extols Allah’s greatness (says *Allâhu akbar*) thirty-three times, making ninety-nine, and completes it by saying:

Lâ ilâha illâ Allâh waḥdahu lâ shareeka lah, lahul-mulk wa lahul-ḥamd wa huwa ‘alâ kulli shay’in qadeer (There is none worthy of worship but Allah alone, with no partner or associates; His is the dominion and for Him is the praise, and He is able to do all things [that befit his majesty]) — his sins will be forgiven even if they are like the foam of the sea.» (Muslim)

A very important point to note is that the prayer of both men and women is exactly the same in all these steps of performing ṣalâh as Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) did. When Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) demonstrated the ṣalâh and ordered the Companions in the mosque to perform it exactly the way they saw him perform it, the Prophet (ﷺ) was addressing both men and women Companions who were present in the mosque.

Pillars of ṣalâh

To summarize the aforementioned illustrations: The ṣalâh has the following steps that must be performed to ensure that it is valid:

1. Standing: prayers have to be performed in a standing position if a person is physically able to do so
2. The opening takbeer: Saying *Allâhu akbar* when commencing the prayer
3. Reciting Soorat al-Fâtihah in every unit of prayer
4. Rukoo‘
5. Rising up from the rukoo‘ until calmly standing upright
6. Standing up from the rukoo‘ in such a way that the person feels that all backbones are straightened
7. Sujood
8. Coming up from the prostration
9. Sitting upright during the pause between the two prostrations
10. Sitting after the second or fourth unit (or the third unit if it is the maghrib prayer) to recite the tashahhud
11. Reciting the tashahhud
12. Reciting the words of supplication — *şalât* and *salâm* — for the Prophet (ﷺ)
13. Tasleem: concluding the prayer with the words *as-salâmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatullâhi (wa barakâtuh)*
14. While fulfilling the above pillars of *şalâh*, a person should be in a state of tranquillity and concentration. One should also follow the correct sequence of these pillars.

These fourteen actions are the pillars of *şalâh*. If one of them is omitted, then the whole unit of *şalâh* (from which the pillar was omitted) must be repeated. Also, if *Allâhu akbar* was not said to initiate the prayer, then the whole *şalâh* must be repeated.

Chapter Fourteen

Other special congregational prayers

The Friday prayer (*ṣalât ul-Jumu'ah*)

This is the weekly Friday congregational prayer wherein all the Muslims of a particular area assemble for the Friday sermon that begins a few minutes after midday for thirty to forty minutes, followed by two units of ṣalâh in congregation. Thereafter, people depart for their normal work.

Friday is somewhat similar to the Sabbath for the Jews and Sunday for the Christians; however, it is different in the sense that it is an important day in which the Muslims break off a bit earlier (a little before noon) from their daily work and all forms of business. Then they gather in large numbers, forming a large congregation to attend the special sermon and ṣalâh.

Description of the Friday prayer

People are expected to join the Friday congregation as early as possible. Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Every Friday, the angels stand at the gate of the mosque. They keep on recording the names of the persons coming

to the mosque, in succession, according to their time of arrival. The example of the one who enters the mosque in the earliest hour is that of one offering a camel (in sacrifice). The one coming next is like the one offering a cow, then a ram, then a chicken, then an egg, respectively. When the imam comes out (for Friday ṣalâh), they (the angels) fold their papers and listen to the *khuṭbah* (sermon).» (Bukhari and Muslim)

Here are some brief guidelines as to what to do after arriving at the mosque for the Friday prayers:

1. Upon entering the mosque and before sitting down, one should perform a two-unit voluntary ṣalâh that was highly recommended by Allah's Messenger (ﷺ). This is known as 'greeting the mosque'.
2. If the imam has not arrived for the sermon, one can silently recite the Qur'an in the meantime.
3. Once the imam climbs the pulpit, one should stop what one is doing and listen attentively to the sermon.
4. After the sermon, the imam leads a two-unit obligatory ṣalâh. This is similar to the dawn ṣalâh, where the recitation is aloud.
5. Once the ṣalâh has concluded, the congregation breaks off. Another four units of optional ṣalâh can then be performed individually.

The purpose and significance of the Friday prayer

The Friday gathering serves a social purpose since it is the largest weekly gathering of the Muslims. Yet the Friday sermon, together with the Friday prayer, also serves an educational and spiritual purpose. It helps to revitalize and energize Muslims, mo-

tivating them to fulfil their roles and duties towards the Muslim community in particular and humanity in general.⁸⁶

With respect to the obligation of performing the Friday ṣalâh in congregation, Allah has ordered all the Muslims in the glorious Qur'an:

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا نُودِيَ لِلصَّلَاةِ مِنْ يَوْمِ الْجُمُعَةِ فَاسْعَوْا إِلَىٰ ذِكْرِ اللَّهِ وَذَرُوا الْبَيْعَ ۚ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٩﴾﴾
(سورة الجمعة: ٩)

﴿O you who believe! When the call is proclaimed to prayer on Friday, hasten earnestly to the remembrance of Allah and leave off business; that is best for you if you but knew.﴾ (Qur'an 62: 9)

At the end of the aforementioned verse, Allah has mentioned that hastening towards Friday ṣalâh early is best for us, if we only knew.

Today, more than any other time in human history, modern life with all its materialistic challenges is increasingly making apparent the need to remember Allah (ﷻ). It also necessitates listening to useful, sincere advice and reminders to nourish our spiritual, intellectual, social, and emotional needs. Thus, in many parts of the Muslim world, Friday ṣalâh has become the cornerstone of establishing new mosques, community centres, Islamic schools, clinics/hospitals, orphanages, and other commercial community buildings. In essence, the weekly obligatory Friday gathering serves as the lifeline of the Muslim community.⁸⁷

The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) also reiterated the obligation of every Muslim to attend the Friday ṣalâh, with a few exceptions.

Ṭâriq ibn Shihâb reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

⁸⁶ Wael Alkhairo, *Speaking for Change: A Guide to Making Effective Friday Sermons* (Beltsville, MD: Amana Publications, 1998), 5.

⁸⁷ Alkhairo, *Speaking for Change*, 5.

«The Friday ṣalâh in congregation is an obligatory duty for every Muslim with four exceptions: a slave, a woman, a boy (non-adult), and a sick person.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

Others exempted from the obligation of Friday ṣalâh include travellers and all those exempted from performing congregational prayers in general due to cold weather, heavy rainfall, dangerous conditions, and so forth, as reported in the following hadith:

«It was narrated by Abu Maleeḥ from his father that he was present during the events of Ḥudaybiyah with the Prophet (ﷺ), and the day was Friday. It was raining, but the soles of their feet had not become damp. The Prophet (ﷺ) commanded them to pray inside their tents.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) also informed us, through various hadiths, of the virtues of Friday and arriving for the Friday congregational ṣalâh as early as possible.

Salmân al-Fârîsî (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Anyone who takes a bath on Friday, cleanses himself as much as he can, puts oil (on his hair) or scents himself, proceeds for the ṣalâh, does not separate two persons sitting together (in the mosque), offers ṣalâh as much as (Allah has) written for him, and remains silent while the imam is delivering the sermon — all his sins in between the present and the previous Friday will be forgiven.» (Bukhari)

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Whoever performs ghusl, comes for the Friday ṣalâh, prays what has been decreed for him, listens attentively until the sermon is over, and prays with the imam (the two

units of congregational prayer) — all his sins between that and the next Friday, and three days more, will be forgiven.» (Muslim)

Jâbir ibn ‘Abdullâh (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

«Friday is divided into twelve hours. There is no Muslim who asks Allah for anything (during it, as long as it is lawful) except that Allah gives it to him, so seek it during the last hour after ‘aṣr.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâ-wood)

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said:

«The best day on which the sun rises is Friday. It was on a Friday that Adam was created, he descended (to earth), his repentance was accepted, he died, and the hour (of judgement) will be established. On Friday, every beast is on the lookout from dawn to sunrise in fear of the last hour — except for the jinn and humankind. During it there is an hour that no Muslim catches while he is praying — asking Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, for his need — except that he is given it.

(Abu Hurayrah then said:) Ka‘b asked: This occurs once every year?

I replied: No, rather every single Friday!

Ka‘b read the Torah and said: The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) has spoken the truth.

I then met ‘Abdullâh ibn Salâm and told him about my conversation with Ka‘b.

‘Abdullâh ibn Salâm said: I know which hour it is.

I said: Tell me.

He replied: It is the last hour on Friday.

I said: How can it be the last hour on Friday, when the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: that no Muslim catches while he is praying? No one praying is that time.

‘Abdullâh ibn Salâm said: Did not Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) say: If anyone is seated waiting for the prayer, he is engaged in the prayer until he observes it?

I said: Yes.

He said: It is that (hour).» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

Abu Burdah ibn Abi Moosâ al-Ash‘ari said:

«‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Umar asked me: Have you heard your father narrating from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) regarding Friday — meaning the hour (of response to supplications)?

I said: Yes. I heard him say that he heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: It is between the time the imam sits down and the time the prayer is finished.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

In an attempt to reconcile the aforementioned two narrations, Muslim scholars have said that perhaps the blessed moment of divine grace, when supplications are answered, alternates between these two times. Others have said that the exact time of response has been kept secret. This is similar to the secrecy of the exact date of the Night of Power (the night the Qur’an was first revealed), which has to be sought in the last ten nights in the month of Ramadan. It is also similar to the greatest names of Allah by which if He is supplicated, He responds. These have been kept secret in order for the believers to exert themselves in as many devotional acts of worship as possible to earn more rewards. Allah knows best.

The importance of the Friday gathering

The importance of the weekly Friday gathering is underpinned by the fact that it is like a Muslim public university that gathers Muslims from all educational, social, and economic backgrounds. Young and old, from all racial and ethnic backgrounds of society are required by Sharia to attend this Friday public school.

Firstly, when Muslims from all walks of life sit together for a minimum of half an hour, and then stand shoulder to shoulder and foot to foot in humility and submission to Allah (ﷻ), they are taught in a practical way that they are all equal in the sight of Allah.

Secondly, one is obligated to leave all worldly matters including school, trade, and business to hasten to the mosque to remember Allah (ﷻ), perform ṣalâh, and listen to the sermon. This is, in itself, a weekly practical training to control one's material desires and uplift one's spiritual needs.

Thirdly, Friday — unlike the Sabbath day for the Jews — is not a day of rest. It is a busy day of social and moral solidarity, learning, and spiritual enrichment.

Finally, the Friday sermon, as well as the ṣalâh and the interaction among Muslims on this great day, teaches and reminds Muslims of their responsibilities and vital roles and duties towards each other, society, religion, and above all towards Allah (ﷻ). Indeed, Friday is a day of Allah's remembrance and renewal of one's faith.

Thus, it is understandable why the Prophet (ﷺ) sternly warned against missing the Friday prayer for no valid, Sharia-compliant reason. Indeed, a person who continues to neglect attending the Friday prayer may have his heart sealed.

It was narrated from 'Abdullâh ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) and Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that they heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) say on the planks of his pulpit:

«People must cease neglecting the Friday prayer, or Allah will put a seal over their hearts and they will truly be among the negligent (Allah will cut them off from His kindness and the sources of goodness.)» (Muslim)

It was narrated from ‘Abdullâh that the Prophet (ﷺ) said about some people who stayed away from Friday prayer:

«I was thinking of ordering a man to lead the people in prayer, and then I would burn down the houses of men who stayed away from Friday prayer, with them inside.» (Muslim)

Important Sharia etiquette of the Friday prayer

Attendance of the weekly Friday gathering is required by the Sharia as an important act of worship. Its importance can be judged from the fact that people from all walks of life and educational backgrounds flock towards the mosque. Both men and women sit down on the floor as a captive audience. There is no opportunity during the sermon to ask questions, respond, or leave. It is only fair to devise proper etiquette that has to be followed to make things comfortable for everyone. In such a crowd, with many not able to lean back and having little room to change positions, it can get very uncomfortable at times.

Therefore, there are rules of etiquette required by the Sharia for both the *khateeb* (the imam giving the sermon) and the people attending the congregation. The following are some of the most important of these manners:

1. Taking a bath, trimming the nails, applying some perfume (for men), performing ablution, and wearing one's clean and best clothes befitting a Friday.
2. Avoiding the intake of raw garlic or onions or smoking. (Smoking is a bad, poisonous habit that has been prohibited by many Muslim scholars.)

3. Cleaning one's mouth with a tooth stick or toothbrush with toothpaste to avoid having bad breath.
4. Performing two units of ṣalâh upon entering the mosque, even if the imam is already delivering the sermon.
5. Sitting quietly and attentively while listening to the imam delivering the sermon. Talking, greeting, or replying to greetings is not allowed once the sermon has started.
6. Refraining from distracting fellow Muslims by reciting the Qur'an or other supplications loudly or by stepping over their heads and shoulders if one has come late and wants to reach the front rows.
7. Reciting soorat *al-Kahf* before the Friday sermon. However, if one was not able to do so before the sermon then it is also acceptable to recite it after the Friday ṣalâh or the night before.
8. Praying the two obligatory units of Friday ṣalâh with humility, following the imam with a sincere intention.
9. Praying four units of sunnah ṣalâh after the sermon and obligatory prayer, or two units in the mosque and two units at home, whichever is easier.
10. Supplicating for Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and asking Allah to bless him and his family.
11. Supplicating to Allah as much as one is able to, since the Prophet (ﷺ) said that there is a special hour on Friday when supplications are answered by Allah.


Responsibility and etiquette of the *khateeb*

The responsibility and task of the imam delivering the sermon is not any easier than that of a public speaker. In fact, it is harder. His responsibility is enormous since he has the great task of enabling hundreds or perhaps thousands of worshippers to fulfil their

religious, social, moral, and ethical duties in society. Moreover, it is hoped that his sermon will bring about the required positive change in the minds and attitudes of the congregation so that they go out spiritually, morally, and intellectually motivated, with a strong yearning for the next Friday sermon.⁸⁸

The Khateeb's responsibility does not stop at merely fulfilling the ritual, rather he must go on to understand his audience, understand how they listen, choose appropriate and relevant topics, set goals for the sermon, and deliver an effective *khutbah*. The speaker's ultimate responsibility is to achieve excellence [*ihsaan*] and to please Allah.⁸⁹

In the following verses, Allah has ordered the Friday khateeb and all other preachers to invite and advise people with wisdom and beautiful preaching:

﴿ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجِدِّ لَهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ﴾


(سورة النحل: ١٢٥)

﴿Invite [all] to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching, and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious, for your Lord knows best who have strayed from His path and who receive guidance.﴾
 (Qur'an 16: 125)

Wisdom is the most important and effective underlying principle that every speaker must use to achieve his objectives. The imam giving the sermon must wisely tailor his talk, putting things in proper perspective and acting appropriately with them, while considering the circumstances. Thus, when planning his sermon and addressing his congregation, he must take into account the

⁸⁸ Alkhairo, *Speaking for Change*, 12.

⁸⁹ Alkhairo, *Speaking for Change*, 12.

unique composition of his audience (men, women, children, intellectuals, laypeople, businesspeople, and others). He must think about this, along with their limitations, their needs and their sensitivities. He must also realize the strengths and weaknesses of his community and audience, and work hard towards their improvement and betterment.⁹⁰

Wisdom demands setting objectives and planning the best approach to achieve them. Giving good advice means preserving people's dignity when giving advice; it means insuring a positive and balanced approach and a respect for the listeners' intelligence. ... Consistent good and positive advice in the *Khutbah* fosters community good will, trust, and confidence. One can never go wrong when approaching the Friday sermon with full respect and dignity to the occasion and the audience.⁹¹

Following are a few rules of etiquette that the khateeb might want to take into account in order to make his sermons more effective:

1. He must choose his topic carefully, considering the unique nature of his audience, which might consist of people from many nationalities, races, languages, schools of Islamic thought, socio-economic classes, ages, and levels of education.
2. He should make his sermon interesting, relevant, well-structured, and effective. It should also be short, concise, and to the point. It should not extend for more than thirty minutes, which is the average attention span for most people.
3. He should avoid familiar subjects which have been dealt with in many other sermons. This is in order to prevent the listeners from feeling that they already know what he is going to say and/or that they have learned nothing new from this sermon. In most cases, this turns people off.

⁹⁰ Alkhairo, *Speaking for Change*, 13.

⁹¹ Alkhairo, *Speaking for Change*, 13-14.

4. His appearance and mannerisms, the pitch and tone of his voice, and his practice of giving strong, relevant evidence from the Qur'an and Sunnah to support his ideas will contribute to his effectiveness.
5. His voice should be neither dull nor monotonous, for that will put the listeners to sleep. The voice must also not be too loud, causing the listener to develop a headache or become annoyed.
6. At all costs, he should avoid talking down to his audience or shouting at them as if they are completely ignorant, thereby belittling them.
7. The sermon must neither be too complex and hard to follow nor too simple and basic.
8. He must exude confidence about his topic. There should be no doubt about his credibility in the minds and hearts of the congregation, so that they take the content of the sermon seriously.
9. He must be in full control of his congregation during the sermon, instructing the people to fill up the front rows and sit properly; correcting those who are distracting others during the sermon; stopping those who are talking, crossing over people's heads and shoulders, or performing sunnah prayers right in front of those listening attentively to the sermon; and the like.

The Eid prayer (ṣalât ul-'eed)

The meaning of the term 'Eid'

The Arabic word Eid (*'eed*) refers to something habitual which returns and is repeated. Thus, the term literally stands for a recurrent event. It also implies a place often visited by people and the period of time in which a particular act is regularly performed.

Likewise, each gathering that assembles regularly comes under the category of Eid. Eids or festivals are symbols in every nation, including those that are based on revealed scriptures and those that are idolatrous, as well as others. Celebrating festivals is an instinctive part of human nature. Most people like to have special occasions to celebrate, wherein they come together and express their joy and happiness.

However, Islam — a complete and comprehensive way of life as Allah has described it in the Qur'an — does not allow us to celebrate any other festivals besides the two major ones. These are *Eid ul-Fiṭr* (at the end of Ramadan) and *Eid ul-Aḍḥâ* (at the climax of the Hajj). Other minor celebrations that do not necessarily come yearly and are allowed in Islam include Friday congregation, wedding celebrations, and celebrations that follow the birth of a newborn.

The Islamic ruling on the Eid prayer

There are three opinions among Muslim scholars regarding the Eid prayer. Some say it is obligatory, while others say it is *fard kifâya* (a communal obligation), meaning that if a part of the Muslim community performs it, the rest are absolved from sin. Yet others say it is a stressed sunnah (a recommended practice of Prophet Muhammad [ﷺ]) which cannot be neglected without a valid excuse).

Those who say that it is a stressed sunnah include Imam Mâlik and Imam Shâfi'i. This is because the Prophet (ﷺ) never neglected the Eid prayer even once in his life. They did not say that it is an individual obligation, wherein if one does not perform it one is considered to be sinful. This is because there is no clear-cut evidence to prove that one is sinful if one omits it for some reason.

This opinion is also based on a question from a Bedouin who came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and asked him about what was obligatory upon him that would enable him to enter paradise. In answer to the Bedouin, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Worship Allah and do not associate anything with Him, establish the prescribed prayers, pay the zakâh, and observe fast (in the month of) Ramadan.

The Bedouin said: By the One in Whose Hand is my soul! I shall never do anything more or less than that.

When he turned to leave, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: Whoever would like to see a man from the people of paradise, let him look at this man.» (Muslim)

The view of Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal is that the Eid prayer is a communal obligation. If a group of Muslims performs it, then all the other Muslims are absolved from sin. His evidence is somewhat similar to that of Imams Mâlik and Shâfi'i.

A majority view the Eid prayer as *fard 'ayn* (an individual obligation). These include Imam Abu Ḥaneefah and many Ḥanafi scholars. This is also the view of Shaykh al-Islâm Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him), ash-Shawkânî, and Ibn Qudâmah. Their strong argument is that the Prophet (ﷺ) always prayed the Eid prayer and never once omitted it. Furthermore, they take as evidence the following verse of the noble Qur'an:

(سورة الكوثر: ٢)

﴿فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَأَنْحَرْ﴾

«Therefore turn in prayer to your Lord and sacrifice.»

(Qur'an 108: 2)

Ibn Qudâmah has said in his well-known book, *al-Mughni*, that the aforementioned verse of the noble Qur'an refers to the Eid prayer.⁹² This indicates that the Eid prayer, followed by the sacri-

⁹² 'Abdullâh ibn Aḥmad ibn Qudâmah, *al-Mughni* (Riyadh: Maktabat ar-Riyâḍ al-Ḥadeethah, 1980).

fice, is a clear instruction from Allah which must be fulfilled. The fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered women — including those who have their menses or post-natal bleeding — to join other Muslims in praising Allah during the Eid prayers, even though they would not perform the actual prayer, is an added argument that Eid prayers are obligatory for the Muslims.

Furthermore, the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered that those women who did not have a *jilbâb* (outer garment for covering the whole body) should borrow from their sisters so that they could come out to attend the Eid prayers.

Umm ‘Aṭiyah (رضي الله عنها) narrated:

«We were ordered to come out on the day of Eid and even bring out the virgin girls and menstruating women from their houses so that they might stand behind the men, say the takbeer along with them, invoke Allah along with them, and hope for the blessings of that day and purification from sins.» (Bukhari)

Ayyoob reported: Ḥafṣah bint Seereen said:

«On the Eids, we used to forbid our girls from going out for the Eid prayer. A lady came and stayed at the palace of Bani Khalaf, and I went to her.

She said: My sister’s husband took part in twelve holy battles along with the Prophet (ﷺ); my sister accompanied her husband in six of them. My sister said that they used to nurse the sick and treat the wounded.

Once she asked: O Allah’s Messenger! If a woman has no *jilbâb*, is there any harm if she does not come out (on Eid day)?

The Prophet (ﷺ) answered: Her companion should let her share her *jilbâb*. Women should participate in the good deeds and the religious gatherings of the believers.» (Bukhari)

Another argument given by those who say that Eid prayers are obligatory is that if Eid falls on a Friday, the Friday congregational prayer becomes optional and the Eid prayer takes precedence. This implies that the Eid prayer takes the place of the Friday congregational obligatory prayer. That in itself is strong proof that the Eid prayer is an obligatory duty on every Muslim.

It was reported that Iyâs ibn Abi Ramlah ash-Shâmi said:

«I was present when Mu‘âwiyah ibn Abi Sufyân asked Zayd ibn Arqam: Did you witness two Eids⁹³ being combined on one day during the time of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ)?

He replied: Yes.

He asked: What did he do?

He answered: He prayed the Eid (prayer) and was lenient about the Friday prayer. He said: Whoever wishes to pray can pray.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

Among the contemporary scholars who support the view that the Eid prayer is obligatory on every Muslim are Shaykh Ibn al-‘Uthaymeen and Shaykh Ibn Bâz (may Allah’s mercy be upon them). Ibn al-‘Uthaymeen states:

What I think is that the Eid prayer is an individual obligation, and that it is not permissible for men to miss it. Rather, they have to attend, because the Prophet (ﷺ) enjoined that. He even commanded women — including virgins and those who usually stayed in seclusion — to attend the Eid prayer. He even commanded the menstruating women to come out to the Eid prayer, but told them to keep away from the prayer place itself. This indicates that it is confirmed [to be obligatory].⁹⁴

Shaykh ‘Uthaymeen further comments:

⁹³ Friday is also considered an Eid. (Editor)

⁹⁴ Islam Q&A, “What is the ruling on Eid prayers?” *Islam-QA.com*, <http://islamqa.info/en/ref/48983> (accessed March 20, 2012).

What seems more likely to be correct in my view, based on the evidence, is that it is an individual obligation, and that it is obligatory for every male to attend the Eid prayer, apart from those who have a valid excuse.⁹⁵

Shaykh Ibn Bâz also discusses the ruling regarding Eid prayer being an individual obligation in his *Majmoo' al-Fatâwah* [Collection of Islamic rulings]. He has concluded that this is more likely to be the correct view, based on the evidence.⁹⁶

The significance of Eid prayer for the Muslims

Every Muslim should be keen to attend the Eid prayers, especially since the opinion that it is obligatory is based on strong evidence. The great blessings and rewards that one gets from attending the Eid prayer, and the fact that one is following the Sunnah of the Prophet (ﷺ) by doing so, should be sufficient motivation for one to not miss it and the subsequent celebrations.

«'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that once Abu Bakr came to her on the day of Eid al-Fiṭr or Eid al-Aḍḥâ while the Prophet (ﷺ) was with her. There were two girl singers with her, singing songs of the *Anṣâr*⁹⁷ about the day of Bu'âth. Abu Bakr said twice: Musical instruments of Satan!

However, the Prophet (ﷺ) said: Leave them, Abu Bakr, for every nation has an Eid (festival) and this day is our Eid.» (Bukhari)

Our Eid or festival, as specified in the aforementioned hadith, holds great meaning for us as Muslims. It informs us that our

⁹⁵ Islam Q&A, "What is the ruling on Eid prayers?"

⁹⁶ Islam Q&A, "What is the ruling on Eid prayers?"

⁹⁷ *Anṣâr*: 'helpers': the Muslim citizens of Madinah who gave refuge to the Prophet (ﷺ) and the other Muslim emigrants from Makkah

feasts or festivals are derived from Sharia alone; they are different from most holidays that are usually based on false religious traditions and superstitions. It is for this important reason that we should celebrate our festivals with great joy and unity, and observe them in a way that distinguishes us from the polytheists.

The Prophet (ﷺ) has ordered us in a number of his statements to be different from the disbelievers. Thus, he instructed us to take special care of the two Eids and ensure that we did not emulate the disbelievers in our celebrations.

Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) reported:

«When Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) came to Madinah, its inhabitants had two days on which they engaged in play (and were merry).

He asked them: What are these two days?

They replied: We used to play on these days during the period of ignorance before Islam.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) replied: Indeed, Allah has replaced them for you with two days that are better than them: the day of sacrifice and the day of breaking the fast.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood and an-Nasâ'i)

In the face of such clear facts and evidence, Muslim scholars have repeatedly emphasized the concept of being different from the disbelievers in our ceremonies. This is because ceremonies have a great impact on humans' minds and behaviour. Being different in our ceremonies also means that we must not participate in the disbelievers' ceremonies on their holidays. As Muslims, we should neither celebrate their festivals nor congratulate them on those occasions; instead, we should oppose them — for instance, by fasting on those specific days.

The rationale behind the Eid prayer

Islam exhorts us to make our social lives visible expressions of God-consciousness, and prayer is the most effective means of fostering this virtue in our lives. This is the reason it has been made essential for Muslims to observe obligatory prayers in congregation. It starts with the five daily prayers; then the Friday prayer is a larger weekly congregational gathering that is a step forward in this respect. After that come the Eid prayers twice a year, which are even bigger than the Friday prayer. Finally, once a year, the Hajj tops them all: more than three million Muslims from all over the globe assemble together for the great pilgrimage. The purpose behind this is to provide opportunities to a greater number of Muslims to attend larger congregations in an atmosphere of religious piety. Apart from prayer, the sermon has also been made an integral part of this gathering so as to enlighten, inform, and educate the Muslims about their obligations in society.

The Eid prayer is valid for men, women, children, travellers, residents, people in congregation, and people praying individually. It is also valid if performed in a house, mosque, or a distant place outside the mosque designated for the prayer.

The etiquette of attending the Eid prayer

1. Make ghusl or ablution. This can be done at any time of the day but to serve its purpose, it is recommended to do it before going out for the prayer.
2. It is a sunnah to eat dates or something else before leaving for the prayer on Eid ul-Fiṭr. On the other hand, it is a sunnah not to eat anything on Eid ul-Aḍḥâ until one has performed the prayer.

3. It is highly recommended to wear one's best clothes on the two Eid days.
4. It is required to groom oneself by using some oil for one's hair and beard and also to use perfume. Women can groom themselves upon the condition that they cover themselves properly when venturing outside the house. They should not use any perfume while going out for the Eid prayers.
5. It is required for a man to apply perfume if he owns it; he may also use his wife's perfume.
6. It is a sunnah to brush the teeth with a tooth stick before going to the Eid prayer.
7. A person must ensure that no foul odour is emanating from him or her, since this would be a source of annoyance for others. It is prohibited to attend the Eid prayer if one smells of onions, garlic, or cigarettes.⁹⁸
8. It is a sunnah to pronounce the *takbeerât* (repeatedly glorifying and praising Allah [st] aloud) on the Eid days, even on the way to the place of the Eid prayer.
9. Women and children have also been ordered by Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) to attend Eid prayers and recite the *takbeerât*.⁹⁹
10. Most Muslim scholars are of the opinion that it is preferred for a person to go to the place of Eid prayer by one route and return home via another route, regardless of whether that person is the imam or a member of the congregation.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Cigarette smoking is harmful and totally forbidden in Islam. For more information, see Ondigo, *Forty Hadiths on Poisonous Social Habits*, 273-286.

⁹⁹ As mentioned in the aforementioned hadith recorded by Bukhari.

¹⁰⁰ Narrated Jâbir ibn 'Abdullâh (رضي الله عنه): «On the day of Eid, the Prophet (ﷺ) used to return (after offering the Eid prayer) through a different route from that by which he went.» (Bukhari)

11. The time for Eid prayer is from the time the sun is three metres above the horizon until the sun reaches its meridian. A majority of scholars have said that the time for the Eid prayer starts when the sun has risen above the height of a spear, as seen by the naked eye, and continues until the sun is approaching its zenith. It is better to offer the Eid prayer in the forenoon, in the early hours after sunrise. Since people have to slaughter the sacrificial animals Eid ul-Aḍḥâ, prayer on this occasion should be offered earlier than the prayer offered on Eid ul-Fiṭr.
12. Ibn al-Qayyim writes that when Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) went to the prayer area, he would perform Eid prayer without any adhân or iqâmah and without saying, "The congregational prayer is ready," and that the sunnah is not to do any of that.¹⁰¹

Description of the Eid prayer

Every Muslim has to pray the Eid prayer as the Prophet (ﷺ) prayed it. Indeed, the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Pray as you have seen me pray.» (Bukhari)

1. There is no sunnah (optional) prayer before or after the Eid prayer.
2. There are seven takbeers in the first unit and five in the second, although there is a reliable hadith in *Sunan Abu Dâwood* that mentions four takbeers in the second unit. Hence, four or five takbeers in the second unit are acceptable. The rest of the prayer is similar to any other prayer.
3. The Eid prayer precedes the religious sermon.

¹⁰¹ «'Aṭâ' reported that during the early days of Ibn az-Zubayr, Ibn 'Abbâs had sent a message to him telling him that the adhân for the Eid prayer was never pronounced [in the lifetime of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)] and the sermon used to be delivered after the prayer.» (Bukhari)

4. Congratulating one another on Eid days is recommended.
5. Whoever misses Eid prayer in congregation may pray two units individually.
6. Making up a missed Eid prayer on the next day is permissible.
7. Play, amusement, and singing within the confines of Islamic law is allowed. Eating and drinking lawful foods and drinks on Eid days is also recommended.

‘Aṭâ’ narrated:

«I heard Jâbir ibn ‘Abdullâh (رضي الله عنه) saying: The Prophet (ﷺ) stood up and started the prayer of Eid. When the prayer ended, he delivered the religious sermon. When the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) finished the sermon, he went to the women and preached to them while he was leaning on Bilâl’s arm. Bilâl was spreading his garment and the ladies were putting alms into it.

I said to ‘Aṭâ’: Do you think it is incumbent upon the imam to go to the women and preach to them after finishing the prayer and sermon?

‘Aṭâ’ said: No doubt it is incumbent on the imam to do so, and why should he not do so?» (Bukhari)

The Ramadan night prayer (*ṣalât ut-tarâweeh*)

The *tarâweeh* prayer is a stressed sunnah; it consists of eight or twenty units that are performed in congregation immediately after the ‘ishâ’ ṣalâh during the month of Ramadan. They are performed two units at a time with a pause after every two.

«‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) came out in the middle of the night and prayed in the mosque,

and some men followed his prayer (prayed in congregation with him).

The next day, the people were talking about that, and then more of them gathered. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) came out on the second night, and they followed his prayer.

The next day, the people were talking about that, and the number of people in the mosque increased on the third night. He came out and they followed his prayer.

Then on the fourth night, the mosque could hardly contain the people, but Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) did not come out to them. Some people started calling out, saying: The prayer!

However, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) did not come out to them until he came out for fajr prayer. When he had finished fajr, he turned to the people, recited the shahâdah and said: I was not unaware of your situation last night, but I feared that the night prayer might be made obligatory for you and you would be unable to do it.» (A sound hadith recorded by Muslim and an-Nasâ'i)

After that, during the time of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), tarâweeh prayer was performed individually either in the mosque or at home. It remained that way until the time of 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (رضي الله عنه), the second Rightly-Guided Caliph, who ordered that it be performed in congregation because of the fear that people would be negligent and leave it completely and thus they would lose its reward: being forgiven all their previous sins. This blessing is exclusive to those who perform it with sincere faith, hoping for the reward from Allah.

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said:

«Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) used to encourage (his Companions) to pray qiyâm (tarâweeh) in Ramadan without commanding them to observe it as an obligatory act. He would

say: He who observed the night prayer in Ramadan out of sincere faith and in the hope of a reward (from Allah) — all his previous sins would be forgiven.

When Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) died, this was the practice, and it continued thus during the caliphate of Abu Bakr (رضي الله عنه) and the early part of the caliphate of 'Umar (رضي الله عنه).» (Muslim, Abu Dâwood, and an-Nasâ'i)

Those who criticize 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (رضي الله عنه) for ordering the tarâweeḥ prayers in Ramadan to be performed in congregation should be informed that what he did was not an innovation. This is because the Prophet (ﷺ) did perform tarâweeḥ in congregation for three consecutive nights of Ramadan until he feared that it might be made compulsory and hence be burdensome on his Ummah. That is why he did not continue performing it in congregation.

Moreover, the Prophet (ﷺ) had also ordered the Muslims to follow his Sunnah and the precedent of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs: Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthmân, and 'Ali.¹⁰² In one hadith, he strongly encouraged and praised those who were performing it in congregation.

It was reported from Muslim ibn Khâlid, from al-A'la ibn 'Abdur-Raḥmân, from his father, from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه), who said:

«Once Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) came out to the mosque during Ramadan and saw a group of people in a corner of the mosque.

He asked: Who are these people?

He was told: These are people who have not (memorized) any Qur'an. Ubayy ibn Ka'b is praying, and they are praying with his prayer (behind him).

¹⁰² A sound hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi, Abu Dâwood, and Ibn Mâjah.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: They have acted correctly, and what a good thing they have done!» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

The prayer of fear (*ṣalât ul-khawf*)

Allah has ordered a special form of the five daily obligatory prayers even during battle; this is known as the prayer of fear. He has instructed:

﴿وَإِذَا صَرَيْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَقْصُرُوا مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ إِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ كَانُوا لَكُمْ عَدُوًّا مُبِينًا ۖ﴾ (١٠١) وَإِذَا كُنْتَ فِيهِمْ فَأَقَمْتَ لَهُمُ الصَّلَاةَ فَلْتَقُمْ طَائِفَةٌ مِنْهُمْ مَعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُوا أَسْلِحَتَهُمْ فَإِذَا سَجَدُوا فَلْيَكُونُوا مِنْ وَرَائِكُمْ وَلْتَأْتِ طَائِفَةٌ أُخْرَى لَمْ يُصَلُّوا فَلْيُصَلُّوا مَعَكَ وَلْيَأْخُذُوا حِذْرَهُمْ وَأَسْلِحَتَهُمْ ۚ وَدَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوْ تَغْفُلُونَ عَنْ أَسْلِحَتِكُمْ وَأَمْتِعَتِكُمْ فَيَمِيلُونَ عَلَيْكُمْ مَيْلَةً وَاحِدَةً ۚ وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِنْ كَانَ بِكُمْ أَذًى مِنْ مَطَرٍ أَوْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَى أَنْ تَضَعُوا أَسْلِحَتَكُمْ ۖ وَخُذُوا حِذْرَكُمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ أَعَدَّ لِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابًا مُهِينًا ﴿١٠٢﴾

(سورة النساء: ١٠١-١٠٢)

«And when you travel throughout the land, there is no blame upon you for shortening the prayer¹⁰³ [especially] if you fear that those who disbelieve may disrupt [or attack] you.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, the disbelievers are ever to you a clear enemy. When you [the commander of an army] are among them and lead them in prayer,¹⁰⁵ let a group of them stand with you and let them carry their arms. When they

¹⁰³ The four-unit prayers are shortened to two units.

¹⁰⁴ The example of the Prophet (ﷺ) and his Companions illustrates that fear is not a condition for this allowance; only travel is.

¹⁰⁵ At times of fear on the battleground.

have prostrated, let them be behind you and have the other group [that has not prayed] come forward and let them pray with you, taking precautions and carrying their arms. Those who disbelieve wish that you would neglect your weapons and your baggage so they could come down upon you in one attack. There is no blame upon you, if you are troubled by rain or are ill, for putting down your arms, but take precautions. Indeed, Allah has prepared for the disbelievers a humiliating punishment. ﴿﴾ (Qur'an 4: 101-102)

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) implemented the instructions in these verses and demonstrated practically how this prayer is performed. He prayed the fear prayer during a battle, as narrated in the following hadith:

Abu Ayyâsh az-Zurqi narrated:

«We were with Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) at 'Asfân while the leader of the pagans was Khâlîd ibn Waleed.

We prayed dhuhr and the pagans said: We had been given a time (during which the Muslims were) heedless; we had been given a time (during which they were) inattentive. If only we had attacked them while they were praying.

The verse permitting the shortening (of the prayer) was revealed between dhuhr and 'aṣr. Therefore, when the time for 'aṣr came, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) stood facing the qibla while the pagans were facing us.

One row stood behind Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and another row stood behind the first row. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) bowed and all of them also bowed. Then he prostrated and the row that was behind also prostrated. The others stood guard over them.

After they (the first row) had prostrated twice and stood up, those standing behind them prostrated. Then the row behind him retreated to the position of the other row, and the rear

row moved forward until they were in the position of the first row. Then Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) bowed and they all bowed with him. When he prostrated, the row behind him also prostrated while the others stood guard over them.

When Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) sat down with the row that was behind, the others then prostrated, and then they all sat down together. He said the tasleem with all of them. He prayed (in this manner) at 'Asfân and on the day of Banu Sulaym.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

The prayer of a traveller (*ṣalât ul-musâfir*)

Islam is a natural way of life. It takes into account the weak nature and busy schedules of human beings. The five daily obligatory prayers must be performed even when one is travelling, fatigued, feeling sick, bedridden, or very busy. Yet Allah (ﷻ), in His infinite mercy, has given various concessions so that one's ṣalâh does not become burdensome. Hence, there is a special way of shortening and combining the ṣalâh while travelling, or if it is raining heavily and those who are not present in the mosque may not be able to go home and return for the next ṣalâh. Allah has clarified in the noble Qur'an:

﴿وَإِذَا ضَرَبْتُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَيْسَ عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ أَنْ تَقْصُرُوا مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ إِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنَّ الْكَافِرِينَ كَانُوا لَكُمْ عَدُوًّا مُبِينًا﴾
(سورة النساء: ١٠١)

﴿And when you travel throughout the land, there is no blame upon you for shortening the prayer [especially] if you fear that those who disbelieve may disrupt [or attack] you. Indeed, the disbelievers are ever to you a clear enemy.﴾
(Qur'an 4: 101)

A Companion of the Prophet (ﷺ) known as Ya'lâ ibn Umayyah doubted this concession of combining and shortening the prayers when they were out of danger of the disbelievers. He remarked to 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb (رضي الله عنه):

«Do you see that people are shortening the prayer? This, despite the fact that Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, said:

(سورة النساء: ١٠١) ﴿...إِنْ خِفْتُمْ أَنْ يَفْتِنَكُمُ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا...﴾

﴿...If you fear that those disbelievers will put you to trial [attack you]...﴾ (Qur'an 4: 101)

This (fear) has now gone in our days.

He replied: I also wondered about what you are wondering, and I mentioned this to Allah's Messenger.

He said: (This is) a charity that Allah has given to you, so accept His charity.» (Muslim and Abu Dâwood)

This shortening of prayers only applies to the dhuhr, 'aṣr, and 'ishâ' prayers. Fajr and maghrib prayers cannot be shortened and therefore always remain as they are. The shortening of ṣalâh is permitted as long as the travellers are away from their hometown, irrespective of their mode of transport: whether it is a train, a car, an aeroplane, a boat, a camel, or on foot.¹⁰⁶

With respect to the distance from the hometown at which one is allowed to shorten and combine the ṣalâh, the strongest of opinions is at least three miles. This is as per the practice of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ).

It was narrated that Yaḥyâ ibn Yazeed al-Hunâi' said:

«I asked Anas ibn Mâlik about shortening the prayer and he said: If Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) went out for a distance

¹⁰⁶ M. A. Quraishy, *Textbook of Islam Book 2* (Nairobi: The Islamic Foundation, 1987), 101.

of three miles or three *farsakhs*¹⁰⁷ (the hadith recorded by Muslim states that Shu‘bah, one of the narrators, had some doubt about it), he observed two raka‘ât.» (Muslim and Abu Dâwood)

Ḥaḍḥ ibn ‘Āṣim ibn ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb narrated:

«I accompanied Ibn ‘Umar on one of his journeys, and he led two units of prayer. Then he turned around and saw people standing (in prayer), so he asked: What are these people doing?

I said: They are performing voluntary prayers.

He said: If I were to perform the voluntary prayers, I would have completed my (obligatory) prayer! O nephew, I accompanied Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) during his travels, and he never prayed more than two units (for the four-unit prayers while travelling) until Allah took his soul.

I accompanied Abu Bakr during his travels and he never prayed more than two units until Allah took his soul.

I accompanied ‘Umar during his travels and he never prayed more than two units until Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, took his soul.

I accompanied ‘Uthmân during his travels and he never prayed more than two units until Allah took his soul. Allah has proclaimed:

﴿لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ...﴾ (سورة الأحزاب: ٢١)

«Indeed you have in the Messenger of Allah an excellent example...» (Qur‘an 33: 21)» (Muslim and Abu Dâwood)

The two ways of combining and shortening the prayers during a journey are as follows:

¹⁰⁷ One *farsakh* is approximately three and a half miles; three farsakhs would be just over ten miles.

Jam' taqdeem (combining two prayers at the time of the earlier prayer)

This is the case where one performs 'aṣr earlier by combining it with dhuhr or performs 'ishâ' earlier by combining it with maghrib. In other words, the latter prayer is brought forward and prayed immediately after the prayer that precedes it, at the time of the earlier prayer.

Thus, in the first case the dhuhr is prayed first, shortened into two units, at its correct time. It is immediately followed by 'aṣr, also shortened to two units. In the second case, maghrib is prayed at the correct time without shortening it. It is followed immediately by 'ishâ', shortened into two units.

Jam' ta'akhir (combining two prayers at the time of the later prayer)

In this case, one delays dhuhr and offers it at the time of 'aṣr, combining and shortening both to two units. Similarly, a person delays maghrib but does not shorten it; instead, it is offered at the time of 'ishâ', combining both in what is known as *jam' ta'akhir*.

In other words, the earlier prayer is delayed and performed just before the later one, at the time that is correct for the later one.

Another special occasion when Allah (ﷻ), through His mercy, has allowed one to combine the ṣalâh is during the time of a pressing need so that there is no hardship upon the worshipper, as per the following hadith.

«It was narrated from Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to combine two prayers in Madinah by joining dhuhr with 'aṣr and maghrib with 'ishâ', even when there was neither fear nor rain. He was asked: Why?

He replied: So that there would not be any hardship on this Ummah.» (Bukhari and an-Nasâ'i)

It was narrated that Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) said:

«The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) prayed dhuhr and 'aṣr together and maghrib and 'ishâ' together in Madinah when there was no fear and he was not travelling.

Abu Zubayr said: I asked Sa'eed: Why did he do that?

He said: I asked Ibn 'Abbâs the same question as you have asked me, and he said: He did not want his Ummah to be subjected to hardship.» (Muslim)

Muslim scholars have explained that a person can resort to this combination when there is a pressing need.¹⁰⁸ However, this should not be habitual, since the five congregational daily prayers, according to the Qur'an and Sunnah, have to be established separately at their fixed, appointed times.

The great Muslim scholar Muhammad ibn al-'Uthaymeen (may Allah have mercy on him) was asked about this kind of combination of prayers without a valid excuse (when there is neither fear nor rain nor one being on a journey). He responded:

The Prophet (ﷺ) defined the prayer times and fixed a time for each prayer. Therefore, bringing forward a prayer from its time or delaying it from its time without an excuse is exceeding the bounds of Allah.

Then he went further and quoted Allah's words in the noble Qur'an that say:

(سورة البقرة: ٢٢٩)

﴿...وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَأُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الظَّالِمُونَ﴾

﴿...And whosoever transgresses the limits ordained by Allah, then such are the wrongdoers.﴾ (Qur'an 2: 229)

¹⁰⁸ An example is a surgeon performing a long operation during which he or she cannot pause to pray. (Editor)

﴿... وَمَنْ يَتَعَدَّ حُدُودَ اللَّهِ فَقَدْ ظَلَمَ نَفْسَهُ...﴾ (سورة الطلاق: ١)

﴿...And whosoever transgresses the set limits of Allah, then indeed he has wronged himself...﴾ (Qur'an 65: 1)

Ibn al-‘Uthaymeen cautioned people to perform the prayers at the correct time. However, if there is some pressing necessity, and it becomes difficult to pray each prayer at its correct time, there is no sin in combining dhuhr and ‘aṣr. This can be done either by bringing forward ‘aṣr to dhuhr’s time or by delaying dhuhr until ‘aṣr’s time, whichever is easier. One may also combine maghrib and ‘ishâ’ in a similar manner.

Finally, Shaykh Ibn al-‘Uthaymeen expressed that it is not permissible to combine the prayers unless failing to do so would cause difficulty and hardship. This is in accordance with what has been reported from Ibn ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه). This is obligatory because when one combines two prayers without a legal cause, these prayers are not accepted because they have been prayed outside their stated times and hence are not correct.¹⁰⁹

The prayer for rain (*ṣalât ul-istisqâ’*)

This is a congregational prayer performed in an open area outside the city in order to beseech Allah for help during times of famine and drought. In it, the worshippers beseech Allah to pour down rain for the afflicted people. Two units of prayer are performed, followed by a sermon comprised of two parts, after which people supplicate for rain. It is advisable for the prayer to be preceded by giving alms, fasting, repenting, doing righteous good deeds, and avoiding evil and bad deeds.

‘Abbâs ibn Tameem (رضي الله عنه) narrated that his uncle said:

¹⁰⁹ Muhammad bin ‘Abdul-‘Aziz al-Musnad, *Fatawa Islamiyah (Islamic Verdicts)* (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2010), 2: 230-231.

«I saw the Prophet (ﷺ) on the day he went out to offer the *istisqâ'* prayer. He turned his back towards the people and faced the qibla and invoked Allah for rain. Then he turned his cloak inside out and led a two-unit prayer with the Qur'an recitation out loud.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

«Hishâm ibn Is-hâq ibn 'Abdullâh ibn Kinânah narrated that his father narrated to him that the Ameer of Madinah, Waleed ibn 'Uqbah — according to 'Uthmân (one of the narrators) Ibn 'Utba — sent him to Ibn 'Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) asking him about how the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) prayed for rain. He (Ibn 'Abbâs) narrated: Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) went out (outside the city), wearing modest clothes, in a state of humility, displaying neediness (to Allah), until he came to the prayer ground.

'Uthmân (one of the narrators) added: He ascended the pulpit. He did not deliver any sermon as you do, but he continued to supplicate and petition (Allah) and say the takbeer. Then he prayed two units as are performed for Eid.» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)¹¹⁰

The prayer during an eclipse (*ṣalât ul-kusoof* and *khusoof*)

Ṣalât ul-kusoof is the ṣalâh performed during the solar eclipse, and *ṣalât ul-khusoof* is the ṣalâh performed during a lunar eclipse.

¹¹⁰ The English translators of *Sunan Abu Dâwood* comment on this hadith as follows: That it was like eid prayer means that it was like it in duration, that no adhân was called, the number of units was the same, and the prayer preceded the sermon, but the prayer for rain has no additional takbeer. Imam Abu Dawood Sulaiman bin Ash'ath, *Sunan Abu Dawood* (Arabic-English), Volumes 1 to 5, trans. Abu Ammar Yasir Qadhi (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2008).

Instead of offering these prayers as the Prophet (ﷺ) did, many Muslims today enjoy the occasion by witnessing the eclipses with their binoculars, laughing, snapping photographs, speculating, and deriving all sorts of analogies and pleasure.

‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated:

«In the lifetime of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ), there was a solar eclipse. He led the ṣalâh and stood up and performed a long qiyâm. Then he bowed for a long while. He stood up again and performed a long qiyâm; this time, the period of standing was shorter than the first. He bowed again for a long time but (the span was) shorter than the first one. Then he prostrated and prolonged the prostration (twice).

He did the same in the second unit, and then finished the prayer; by then the solar eclipse had cleared.

Then he delivered a sermon. After praising and glorifying Allah, he said: The sun and the moon are two signs amongst the signs of Allah; they do not eclipse because of the death or life (birth) of anyone. So when you see the eclipse, remember Allah, make takbeer, offer ṣalâh, and give charity.

The Prophet (ﷺ) then said: O followers of Muhammad! By Allah! There is none who has more *gheerah*¹¹¹ than Allah. He has forbidden His slaves, male or female, from committing illegal sexual intercourse. O followers of Muhammad! By Allah — if you knew what I know, you would laugh little and weep much.» (Bukhari)

‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) reported:

«There was a solar eclipse during the lifetime of the Prophet (ﷺ). Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) offered the eclipse prayer and

¹¹¹ gheerah: feeling of jealousy, self-respect, fury, and anger when one’s honour and prestige is injured or challenged with regard to women and other issues.

stood for a long time, equal to the period in which one could recite Soorat *al-Baqarah*; then he bowed for a long time. He stood up for a long period which was shorter than that of the first standing, then he bowed again for a long time but for a shorter period than the first. After that, he prostrated twice and stood up for a long period, which was shorter than that of the first standing. Then he bowed for a long time, but not as long as the previous one. He raised his head and stood up for a long period, which was shorter than the first standing. Then he bowed for a long time, but not as long as the first bowing. He then prostrated (twice) and finished the ṣalâh. By then, the solar eclipse had cleared.

The Prophet (ﷺ) finally said: The sun and the moon are two signs from among the signs of Allah. They do not eclipse because of the death of somebody or because of his life (birth). So when you see them, remember Allah...» (Bukhari)

The funeral prayer (*ṣalât ul-janâzah*)

Performing funeral prayer in congregation is considered to be a *farḍ kifâya*, so if a section of the Muslim community congregates to fulfil it, then the obligation is removed from the entire community. If any Muslims are buried without the funeral prayer being performed over them, the whole Muslim community is held responsible, and it is recorded as a sin in their accounts.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) did not perform the funeral prayer for his son, Ibrâheem, who died at the early age of eighteen months. However, this does not mean that the funeral prayer cannot be prayed for children below the age of puberty; rather, there are a number of occasions when the Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) not only

performed the funeral prayer for children but also recommended such a practice.

It was narrated that ‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها) said:

«Ibrâheem, the son of the Prophet, died when he was eighteen months old. The Messenger of Allah did not offer the funeral prayer for him.» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

Al-Mugheerah ibn Shu‘bah narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«The rider has to be behind the funeral (procession), and the walker wherever he wishes, and the (funeral) prayer should be offered for a child.» (A sound hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi, Ibn Mâjah, and an-Nasâ’i)

It was narrated from Ziyâd ibn Jubayr, from his father, that al-Mugheerah ibn Shu‘bah said — and (the narrator) thinks that the family of Ziyâd told him that he attributed it to the Prophet (ﷺ):

«The rider should travel behind the bier, and those on foot should walk behind it, in front of it, on its right or on the left, keeping close to it. The funeral prayer should be offered for a miscarried fetus, and supplications for forgiveness and mercy should be made for its parents.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

The English translators of *Sunan Abu Dâwood* comment on the aforementioned hadith:

There is a difference of opinion concerning the funeral prayer for the miscarried fetus. Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Ishâq ibn Ibrâheem hold the view that if the fetus is older than four months and ten days, and the soul has been breathed into it, it is necessary to perform the funeral prayer for it. Ibn ‘Abbâs, however, is of the opinion that if a child

is born with signs of life in it, the funeral prayer must be held for it.¹¹²

A principle of Islamic jurisprudence states that whenever an action of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) seems to contradict his statement, one is required to go by his statement. This is because whatever he acted upon could be specifically for him, whereas a general statement is, in most cases, meant for everyone unless there is an exception. Hence, in the case of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) not performing the funeral prayer for his son Ibrâheem, it could either mean that it was specifically for him or that the funeral prayer is not strictly compulsory for children who have not attained the age of puberty.

The virtues of performing the funeral prayer

The one who performs the funeral prayer sincerely, for the sake of Allah and not to show off or to be seen by others, will get great rewards equivalent to the size of Mount Uḥud.

Dâwood ibn 'Âmir ibn Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqâṣ narrated from his father that he was sitting with 'Abdullâh ibn 'Umar when Khabbâb came and said:

«O 'Abdullâh ibn 'Umar, have you not heard what Abu Hurayrah is saying — that he heard the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) say: Whoever comes out with the funeral from the house (of the deceased) and offers the funeral prayer, and then follows (the funeral) until (the deceased) is buried, will have two *qeerât* (a measurement, as of gold) of reward, with each *qeerât* like (Mount) Uḥud. Whoever offers the funeral prayer and returns will have a reward like (Mount) Uḥud.

¹¹² Imam Abu Dawood, *Sunan Abu Dawood*, 3:956.

Ibn ‘Umar sent Khabbâb to ‘Â’ishah to ask her about what Abu Hurayrah had said, and then to come back and tell him what she replied. Ibn ‘Umar picked up a handful of pebbles in the mosque, turning them over in his hand, until the messenger came back to him and said: ‘Â’ishah said: Abu Hurayrah spoke the truth.

Ibn ‘Umar threw the pebbles that were in his hands onto the floor and said: We have missed out on many *qeerât*.» (Muslim)

The funeral prayer, just like the five daily compulsory prayers, is performed in congregation. That was the way the Prophet (ﷺ) taught and did it, and he said:

«Pray as you have seen me pray.» (Bukhari)

Moreover, it was narrated that Ibn ‘Abbâs (رضي الله عنه) said: I heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say:

«Any Muslim who dies and has forty men (who do not associate anything with Allah) attend his funeral, their intercession for him will be accepted.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

Where the funeral prayer is performed

It is permissible for the funeral prayer to be performed inside the mosque according to the incident that took place when Sa‘d ibn Abi Waqqâs died and his funeral was conducted in the mosque:

«It was narrated from ‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها) that when Sa‘d ibn Abi Waqqâs (رضي الله عنه) died, the wives of the Prophet (ﷺ) sent instructions to bring his bier into the mosque so that they might offer the funeral prayer for him. They (those taking part in the funeral) did so accordingly.

It was placed in front of their apartments, and they offered prayers for him. Then it was taken out through the Gate of Funerals, which was near a place where people used to sit.

They heard that people were criticizing them for that and saying that biers should not be brought into the mosque.

This was conveyed to ‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها), who said: How hastily the people criticize something of which they have no knowledge! They criticize us for having the bier carried into the mosque. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) offered the funeral prayer for Suhayl ibn Baydâ’ only in the mosque.» (Muslim)

However, it is preferable to have a place outside the mosque that is specifically set aside for the funeral prayer, since that was the usual practice of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ).

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) was informed about the death of the Negus (King of Abyssinia) on the day that the Negus died. He said: Ask Allah’s forgiveness for your brother.

The Prophet (ﷺ) then made them line up in rows at the place of prayer, and he said takbeer four times (offered the funeral prayer for him).» (Bukhari and Muslim)

‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«The Jews brought to the Prophet (ﷺ) a man and a woman from among them who had committed adultery. He ordered the stoning (to death) of both near the place for offering funeral prayers beside the mosque.» (Bukhari)

How the funeral prayer is performed

The body of the deceased is placed in front of the imam who is leading the congregational funeral prayer. He stands facing the qibla, behind the head of the deceased if it is a male. If the de-

ceased is a female, he stands behind her in the middle. (Bukhari and Abu Dâwood)

The other Muslims joining the funeral prayer line up behind and close to the imam in three rows¹¹³ directly behind each other, since there is neither bowing nor prostration in the funeral prayer.

It was narrated from Marthad al-Yazani, from Mâlik ibn Hu-bayrah, who said that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said, "For the one who dies and has three rows of Muslims offer the funeral prayer for him, (paradise) is due."¹¹⁴

The prayer is performed with four, five, six, seven, or nine tak-beers; each number has been reported from the authentic hadiths and acts of the Prophet's Companions. During the prayer, one can raise the hands with each takbeer to the usual position, in line with the shoulders or the ear lobes. It is also permissible to raise the hands only once with the initial takbeer, after which the rest of the takbeers are recited without raising the hands.

Imam Bukhari has recorded the sunnah way of performing the funeral prayer in his book of Hadith. He says that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Whoever offered the funeral prayer...»

and also said:

«Offer the funeral prayer for your friend.»

Moreover, he said:

«Offer the funeral prayer for the Negus.»

He called it a *ṣalâh* although there is neither bowing and prostration, nor loud recitation (of the Qur'an) in it; there are takbeer and tasleem.

¹¹³ Bukhari.

¹¹⁴ A weak hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood. However, as a statement of a Companion of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) it is authentic.

Ibn 'Umar never performed the [funeral] prayer without ablution, or at sunrise or at sunset and used to raise both hands [at the time of saying takbeer].

Al-Ḥasan al-Baṣri said: I noticed the people [the Prophet's Companions] regarding the one with whom they were satisfied to lead them in the compulsory [five daily] prayers as the most deserving man to lead the funeral prayer.

If a person had not done ablution on the Eid day [before the Eid prayers], or before funeral prayer, he would look for water [to do ablution] and would not perform tayammum.

If anyone happens to pass by a funeral and the people are offering the [funeral] prayer, then it is advisable for him to join them by saying takbeer.

Ibn Musayyib said: [In funeral prayers] there are four takbeerât, whether the prayer is offered at night or by day, in a journey or at home.

Anas said: One takbeer for starting the prayer, and quoting Qur'an he said:

﴿وَلَا تُصَلِّ عَلَى أَحَدٍ مِّنْهُمْ مَّتَّ أَبَدًا...﴾ (سورة التوبة: ٨٤)

«And never [O Muhammad] pray [funeral prayer] for anyone of them [hypocrites] who dies...» (Qur'an 9: 84)

...And in the funeral prayer, there are rows and an imam.¹¹⁵

During the funeral prayer, the right hand should be placed on the left hand, with both hands folded on the chest, just as in the regular five daily compulsory prayers. There is no statement of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) that states the contrary.¹¹⁶ Immediately after the first takbeer, one should seek the refuge of Allah from

¹¹⁵ Muhammad Muhsin Khan, *Sahih al-Bukhari* (Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997), 2: 235-236.

¹¹⁶ Bukhari and Abu Dâwood.

the Satan (say a '*oodhu billâhi min ash-shaytân ir-rajeem*)¹¹⁷ and say *bismillâh ir-Raḥmân ir-Raḥeem*,¹¹⁸ before reciting Soorat al-Fâtiḥah silently as was the practice of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ).¹¹⁹ It is permissible to recite another chapter from the Qur'an after al-Fâtiḥah.

It was narrated that Ṭalḥah ibn 'Abdullâh ibn 'Awf said:

I offered the funeral prayer behind Ibn 'Abbâs. He recited *Fâtiḥat ul-Kitâb* (soorat al-Fâtiḥah) and another soorah, which he recited loudly such that we could hear him. When he finished, I took him by the hand and asked him. He said: (It is) the Sunnah and the truth.¹²⁰

Although it is permissible to recite both Soorat al-Fâtiḥah and another soorah aloud, it is preferable to recite quietly. This is based on the narration of Abu Umâmah, who said:

The Sunnah when offering the funeral prayer is to recite *Umm ul-Qur'ân* [the essence of the Qur'an — soorat al-Fâtiḥah] quietly in the first takbeer, then to say three [more] takbeerât and to say the tasleem after the last one.¹²¹

According to the Sunnah, in the second takbeer, one should send ṣalâh for the Prophet (ﷺ) as is normally said in the second part of the second tashahhud.

«'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Abi Laylâ narrated:

¹¹⁷ A reliable hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi.

¹¹⁸ A weak hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood and at-Tirmidhi. However, al-Albâni and others like adh-Dhahabi, al-Khuzaymah, an-Nawawi, and al-Ḥâkim have authenticated it.

¹¹⁹ Bukhari.

¹²⁰ Imam an-Nasai, *Sunan an-Nasâ'i* (Arabic-English), trans. Nasiruddin al-Khattab (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2007), 3:104, hadith no. 1989. This is a sound narration.

¹²¹ an-Nasai, *Sunan an-Nasâ'i*, 3:105. This is a sound narration.

Ka'b ibn 'Ujrah met me and said: Shall I not give you a present that I got from the Prophet (ﷺ)?

I ('Abdur-Raḥmân) said: Yes, give it to me.

He said: We asked: O Allah's Messenger! How should one (ask Allah to) send ṣalâh on you and the members of your family, for Allah has taught us how to greet you.

He replied: Say:

Allâhummaṣalli 'alâMuḥammadinwa 'alââliMuḥammadin, kamâṣallayta 'alâ Ibrâheema wa 'alâ âli Ibrâheema. Innaka ḥameedum majeed. Allâhumma bârik 'alâ Muḥammadin wa 'alâ âli Muḥammadin, kamâ bârakta 'alâ Ibrâheema wa 'alâ âli Ibrâheem. Innaka ḥameedum majeed.

(O Allah, send Your ṣalâh [grace, honour, and mercy] upon Muhammad and upon the family of Muhammad, as You sent Your ṣalâh upon Abraham and the family of Abraham. You are indeed Praiseworthy, Most Glorious. O Allah, send Your blessings upon Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, as You sent Your blessings upon Abraham and the family of Abraham. You are indeed Praiseworthy, Most Glorious).» (Bukhari)

In the third, fourth, or fifth takbeer of the funeral prayer, the Prophet (ﷺ) recommended that one sincerely supplicate for the deceased, his or her relatives, and all the other Muslims: alive or deceased, young or old, present or absent from the funeral procession.

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said that he heard Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) say:

«When you offer the funeral prayer for the deceased, supplicate sincerely for him.» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood and Ibn Mâjah)

Among the many different supplications that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) recited during the funeral prayers are:

«Allâhumma! Anta rabbuhâ, wa anta khalaqtahâ, wa anta hadaytahâ lil-Islâm, wa anta qabaḍta rooḥahâ, wa anta a'lamu bisirrihâ wa 'alâniyatihâ. Ji'na shufa'â (lahu) faghfir lah.

(O Allah! You are his Lord and You created and guided him to Islam, and [now] You have taken his soul and You know best about his secrets and his outward appearance. We have come to intercede for him, so forgive him.)» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said:

«Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) offered the funeral prayer and said: Allâhummaghfir li ḥayyinâ wa mayyitinâ, wa ṣagheerinâ wa kabeerinâ, wa dhakarînâ wa unthânâ, wa shâhidînâ wa ghâ'ibînâ. Allâhumma man aḥyaytahu minnâ fa aḥyihî 'alal-eemân, wa man tawaffaytahu minnâ fatawaffahu 'alal-Islâm. Allâhumma! Lâ taḥrimnâ ajrahu wa lâ tudhillânâ ba'dah.

(O Allah! Forgive our living and our dead, our young and our old, our male and our female, our present ones and our absent ones. O Allah! Whomever You give life among us, cause him to live upon faith; and whomever you cause to die among us, cause him to die upon Islam. O Allah! Do not deprive us of his reward and do not cause us to go astray after that.)» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

It was narrated that Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) said:

«The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) came to Abu Salamah, and his eyes were fixed open. He closed them, and then he said: When the soul is taken, the sight follows it.

Some of his family wailed, and he said: Do not pray against yourselves except for good things, for the angels say âmeen to whatever you say.

Then he said:

Allâhummaghfir li Abi Salamah warfâ ' darajâtahu fil-mah-diyyeena wakhlufhu fee 'aqbihi fil-ghâbireena, waghfir lanâ wa lahu yâ rabbil-âlameen! Wafsaḥ lahu fee qabrihi wa nawwir lahu feeḥ.

(O Allah, forgive Abu Salamah and raise him in status among those who are guided, and take care of his family who are left behind. Forgive us and him, O Lord of the worlds, and make his grave spacious for him and illuminate it for him).» (Muslim)

It was narrated that Jubayr ibn Nufayr said that he heard 'Awf ibn Mâlik say:

«The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) offered the funeral prayer, and I memorized some of his supplications. He said:

Allâhummaghfir lahu warḥamhu wa 'âfihi, wâ'afu 'anhu, wa akrim nuzulahu wa wâssi ' mudkhalahu waghsilhu bil-mâ'i wath-thalji wal-barad, wa naqqihi min al-khaṭâyâ kamâ naqqayta ath-thawbul-abyaḍu minad-danas, wa 'abdilhu dâran khayran min dâriḥ, wa ahlân khayran min ahl-iḥ, wa zawjan khayran min zawjih, wa adkhlilul-jannata, wa a'idh-hu min 'adhâbil-qabri wa min 'adhâb in-nâr.

(O Allah, forgive him, have mercy on him, keep him safe and sound, and pardon him. Receive him with honour; make his grave spacious; wash him with water, snow, and hail; cleanse him of his sins as a white garment is cleansed of dirt. Give him a home better than his home, a family better than his family, and a spouse better than his spouse. Ad-

mit him to paradise and protect him from the torment of the grave and the torment of the fire.)» (Muslim)

After the last takbeer of the funeral prayer, the Prophet (ﷺ) would finish the prayer either by saying *as-salâmu 'alaykum wa rahmatullâh* (may Allah's peace and mercy be upon you), turning his head to the right side of his shoulders only, or by saying *as-salâmu 'alaykum wa rahmatullâh*, turning his head to his right side and then his left side.¹²²

¹²² al-Bayhaqi, ad-Dâraqutni, and al-Ḥâkim in their Sunan books of Hadith, and Muḥammad Naṣir ud-Deen al-Albâni in his *Aḥkâm al-Janâ'iz* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islâmi, 1969), 127-128, as quoted by Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips, *Funeral Rites in Islam* (Sharjah: Dar Al Fatah Printing, Publishing & Distribution Co., 1996), 114.

Chapter Fifteen

Voluntary (*sunnah*) prayers

Generally speaking, these comprise the voluntary prayers, also referred to as *nawâfil* (optional) prayers. The Prophet (ﷺ) recommended the regular performance of these prayers according to the best of one's ability, day and night, except for during the prohibited times. These forbidden times include the time between fajr and sunrise, during sunrise, when the sun reaches its zenith, after 'aṣr until sunset, and during the setting of the sun. (Bukhari)

The purpose of these prayers is to compensate for any faults or negligence that may have inadvertently occurred in one's obligatory prayers; through these supererogatory prayers, one's obligatory prayers are completed and accepted.

It was narrated from Tameem ad-Dâri that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«The first thing for which a person will be brought to account on the Day of Resurrection will be his prayer. If it is complete, the voluntary (prayers) will also be recorded for him (as an increase). If it is not complete, Allah will say to His angels: Look and see whether you find any voluntary prayers for My slave, and take them to make up for what is lacking from his obligatory prayers. Then all his deeds will be reckoned in a similar manner.» (A sound hadith recorded by Ibn Mâjah)

These include, among others, the optional prayers discussed further in this chapter. All or most of these are more meritorious when performed inside one's home. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«You should pray in your houses, for the best of a man's prayer is in his house, apart from the obligatory prayers.»
(Muslim)

It was narrated that Jâbir (رضي الله عنه) said that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«When one of you has finished praying in the mosque, let him give his house a share of his prayer, for Allah will instil goodness in his house because of his prayer.» (Muslim)

It was narrated from Ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Perform some of your prayers in your houses and do not make them like grave (yards).» (Bukhari and Muslim)

The prayer for decision-making (*ṣalât ul-istikhârah*)

This is a voluntary prayer, consisting of two units, for seeking the guidance and help of Allah in making important decisions in life. After individuals have done their best in taking the necessary steps towards making a choice and have sought sincere advice from close and trusted friends on any important decision that they wish to make (related to, for instance, business, marriage, or an important journey), they turn to Allah and perform two units of voluntary prayer. Thereafter, they make a special supplication that was taught by Allah's Messenger (ﷺ).

Narrated Jâbir (رضي الله عنه):

«The Prophet (ﷺ) used to teach us the *istikhârah* prayer for each and every matter, as he used to teach us the soo-

rahs from the Qur'an. (He used to say): If any one of you intends to do something, he should offer a two-unit prayer other than the obligatory prayer and then say:

Allâhumma inni astakheeruka bi- 'ilmik, wa astaqdiruka bi-qudratik, wa as'aluka min fadlik al- 'adheem, fa inna-ka taqdiru wa lâ aqdir, wa ta'lamu wa lâ a'lam, wa anta 'allâm ul-ghuyoob. Allâhumma! In kunta ta'lamu anna hâdhal-amra (then he or she should mention the matter [need]) *khayrul lee fee deeni wa ma 'âshi wa 'âqibati amri* (or say: *fee 'âjili amri wa âjilihi*) *faqdirhu lee, wa yassirhu lee thumma baarik lee feehi, wa in kunta ta'lamu anna hâdhal-amra sharrul lee fee deeni wa ma 'âshi wa 'âqibati amri* (or say: *fee 'âjili amri wa 'âjilihi*) *fasrifhu 'anni wasrifni 'anhu waqdur lee al-khayra haythu kân, thummar-raḍinee bih.*

(O Allah, I seek the counsel of Your knowledge, and I seek the help of Your omnipotence, and I beseech You for Your magnificent grace. Surely, You are capable and I am not. You know and I know not, and You are the Knower of the unseen. O Allah, if You know that this matter [mention the thing to be decided] is good for me in my religion and in my life and for my welfare in the life to come [or say: in this life and the hereafter], then ordain it for me and make it easy for me, and then bless me in it. If You know that this matter is bad for me in my religion and in my life and for my welfare in the life to come [or say: in this life and the hereafter], then distance it from me, and distance me from it, and ordain for me what is good wherever it may be, and help me to be content with it).» (Bukhari and Abu Dâwood)

The prayer after midnight (*ṣalât ut-tahajjud*)

Any voluntary prayer performed after midnight is known as *tahajjud*. These prayers are usually performed after one has slept for a while and has then made the effort to arise from sweet slumber. Thus, one stands up for prayers in the silent, quiet moments of the night, out of sight of everyone else except Allah (ﷻ). These are considered to be the best prayers after the obligatory five daily prayers. They are also considered to be the ones that are performed with utmost sincerity, since there is no one at that moment of the night to witness this prayer. Therefore, they merit great rewards, as Allah has promised in the noble Qur'an:

﴿ نَتَجَافَى جُنُوبُهُمْ عَنِ الْمَضَاجِعِ يَدْعُونَ رَبَّهُمْ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَمِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ يُنفِقُونَ ﴿١٦﴾ فَلَا تَعْلَمُ نَفْسٌ مَّا أُخْفِيَ لَهُمْ مِّن قُرَّةِ أَعْيُنٍ جَزَاءً بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ أَفَمَن كَانَ مُؤْمِنًا كَمَن كَانَ فَاسِقًا لَا يَسْتَوُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ أَمَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ فَلَهُمْ جَنَّاتُ الْمَأْوَى نُزُلًا بِمَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٩﴾ ﴾

(سورة السجدة: ١٦-١٩)

﴿Their sides part [they arise] from their beds; they supplicate to their Lord in fear and aspiration, and from what We have provided them, they spend. No soul knows what has been hidden for them of comfort for eyes as reward for what they used to do. Then is one who was a believer like one who was defiantly disobedient? They are not equal. As for those who believed and did righteous deeds, for them will be the gardens of refuge as accommodation for what they used to do.﴾

(Qur'an 32: 16-19)

Elsewhere in the noble Qur'an, Allah has described as His humble, devoted servants those who make an effort to establish tahajjud prayers, weeping and beseeching Him to forgive their sins and save them from the torment and punishment of the hellfire:

﴿وَعِبَادُ الرَّحْمَنِ الَّذِينَ يَمْشُونَ عَلَى الْأَرْضِ هَوْنًا وَإِذَا خَاطَبَهُمُ الْجَاهِلُونَ قَالُوا سَلَامًا﴾ (٦٣) وَالَّذِينَ يَبِيتُونَ لِرَبِّهِمْ سُجَّدًا وَقِيَمًا ﴿٦٤﴾ وَالَّذِينَ يَقُولُونَ رَبَّنَا اصْرِفْ عَنَّا عَذَابَ جَهَنَّمَ إِنَّ عَذَابَهَا كَانَ غَرَامًا ﴿٦٥﴾ إِنَّهَا سَاءَتْ مُسْتَقَرًّا وَمُقَامًا ﴿٦٦﴾ وَالَّذِينَ إِذَا أَنْفَقُوا لَمْ يُسْرِفُوا وَلَمْ يَقْتُرُوا وَكَانَ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ قَوَامًا ﴿٦٧﴾ (سورة الفرقان: ٦٣-٦٧)

«And the servants of the Most Merciful are those who walk upon the earth easily, and when the ignorant address them, they say: peace, and those who spend the night to their Lord prostrating and standing and those who say: Our Lord, avert from us the punishment of hell. Indeed, its punishment is ever-adhering; indeed, it is evil as a settlement and residence. And [they are] those who, when they spend, do so not excessively or sparingly but are ever, between that, moderate.» (Qur'an 25: 63-67)

In yet another passage of the noble Qur'an, Allah has given us a vivid vision of the reward in paradise for His righteous servants who sacrifice much of their sleep, spending most of the night performing the tahajjud prayer. In the early hours before dawn, they always seek Allah's forgiveness; during the day they are found busy in giving charity to the needy.

﴿إِنَّ الْمُتَّقِينَ فِي جَنَّاتٍ وَعُيُونٍ﴾ (١٥) ءَاخِذِينَ مَا آتَاهُمْ رَبُّهُمْ إِنَّهُمْ كَانُوا قَبْلَ ذَلِكَ مُحْسِنِينَ ﴿١٦﴾ كَانُوا قَلِيلًا مِّنَ اللَّيْلِ مَا يَهْجَعُونَ ﴿١٧﴾ وَلَا نَسْأَرُهُمْ بِسُغُفَرِهِمْ يُسْتَغْفَرُونَ ﴿١٨﴾ وَفِي أَمْوَالِهِمْ حَقٌّ لِّلسَّائِلِ وَالْمَحْرُومِ ﴿١٩﴾ (سورة الذاريات: ١٥-١٩)

«Indeed, the righteous will be among gardens and springs accepting what their Lord has given them. Indeed, they were before that doers of good. They used to sleep but little of the night, and in the hours before dawn they would ask forgiveness, and from their properties was the right of the petitioner and the deprived.»

(Qur'an 51: 15-19)

Because of the meritorious nature of the tahajjud prayers as described in the noble Qur'an, Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) specified the third part of the night as the best time to worship Allah (ﷻ). That is the time when He comes down from His throne to the lowest heaven and sends angels to humankind to seek out:

1. The ones who are asking for forgiveness of their sins so that He may forgive them,
2. The ones who are repenting so that He may accept their repentance,
3. The ones who are in need so that He may fulfil their needs, and
4. The ones who are supplicating so that He may answer their supplications.

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Our Lord — the Blessed, the Superior — comes down on the nearest heaven to us during the last third of every night and says: (Is there anyone) who invokes Me, that I may respond to his invocation? (Is there anyone) who asks Me for something, that I may grant him his request? (Is there anyone) who seeks My forgiveness, that I may forgive him?» (Bukhari)

The tahajjud prayers are performed two units at a time, with the tasleem given at the end of the second unit. They are concluded with one unit of prayer known as witr, thus making a total of either three, five, seven, nine, eleven, or thirteen units¹²³ of prayer, depending on a person's strength to stand for the night prayers.

A common factor characterizing those who establish the tahajjud prayer is that they are people who have knowledge of Allah's might and power and His other perfect attributes. Hence, they spend their wealth in the cause of Allah to take care of the needy, as we have seen in the aforementioned three passages of the Qur'an.

¹²³ A sound hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi.

Allah has distinguished the knowledgeable from the ignorant by specifying that the truly knowledgeable people are those who spend much of their night standing, bowing, and prostrating to Him in worship.

﴿أَمَنْ هُوَ فَتَنْتِ عَائَةَ آلِ نِجَالٍ سَاجِدًا وَقَائِمًا يَحْذَرُ الْآخِرَةَ وَيَرْجُوا رَحْمَةَ رَبِّهِ ۗ قُلْ هَلْ يَسْتَوِي الَّذِينَ يَعْلَمُونَ وَالَّذِينَ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ إِنَّمَا يَتَذَكَّرُ أُولُوا الْأَلْبَابِ ۗ﴾ (سورة الزمر: ٩)

﴿Is one who is devoutly obedient during periods of the night, prostrating and standing, fearing the hereafter and hoping for the mercy of his Lord [like one who does not]? Say: Are those who know equal to those who do not know? Only they will remember [who are] people of understanding.﴾ (Qur'an 39: 9)

Because of the numerous virtues¹²⁴ of the tahajjud prayer in training and cultivating the soul, refining the heart, and bringing one closer to Allah, tahajjud prayers were initially made obligatory upon Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) and his Companions. However, after one year, the obligation was eased and the tahajjud prayer was made optional for the Companions of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ). Nevertheless, it remained obligatory for Allah's Messenger (ﷺ)¹²⁵ due to his heavy responsibilities of inviting the non-believing Quraysh to Islam and moulding his Companions, thus preparing them also to shoulder the heavy duty of calling the whole world to Islam.

In his beautiful book *The Prayer: Its Effect in Increasing Eemaan and Purifying the Soul*, Husayn al-Awaayishah says that there are great and hidden benefits arising from the tahajjud prayer. Among them is the fact that it strengthens our hearts on the truth. It is the secret to success; it keeps us away from sins and

¹²⁴ For a comprehensive discussion on the night prayer and its numerous virtues, see al-Awaayishah, *The Prayer*, 45-57.

¹²⁵ Muslim.

evil deeds, increases our faith, and raises us to the status of sincere, righteous worshippers of Allah.¹²⁶

The meritorious rewards for the tahajjud prayers can be gauged from the aforementioned four passages quoted from the Qur'an and numerous hadiths from Allah's Messenger (ﷺ). These encourage one to perform at least a few units of the tahajjud prayers, especially if one is unable to stand for a long time.

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that: «The Prophet (ﷺ) was asked: Which prayer is the best after the obligatory prayers, and which fasting is the best after the fasting of the month of Ramadan?

He replied: The best prayer after the prescribed prayer is prayer in the middle of the night, and the best fasting after the month of Ramadan is fasting in the month of Allah, Muḥarram.» (Muslim)

«'Ali (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) said: Indeed in paradise, there are chambers whose outside can be seen from their inside and whose inside can be seen from their outside.

A Bedouin stood up and asked: Who are they for, O Messenger of Allah?

He responded: For those who speak well, feed others, fast regularly, and perform prayer during the night while the people are asleep.» (A reliable hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)

It was narrated from Abu Sufyân that Jâbir (رضي الله عنه) said: I heard the Prophet (ﷺ) say:

«During the night is an hour. Between this hour, if a Muslim asks Allah for good in this world and in the hereafter,

¹²⁶ al-Awaayishah, *The Prayer*, 46.

He will give it to him — and that happens every night.»
(Muslim)

Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:
«May Allah have mercy on a man who stood up at night and woke his wife up, and if she did not (wake up), he sprinkled water on her face (to wake her). May Allah have mercy on a woman who stood up to pray at night and woke her husband up, and if he did not (wake up), she sprinkled water on his face (to wake him).» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

Abu Umâmah al-Bâhili (رضي الله عنه) narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Perform the night prayer, for it was the practice of the pious before you. It draws one near to Allah, the Most High, and is an expiation for sins and a prevention of evil deeds.»
(A reliable hadith recorded by Ahmad, al-Bayhaqi, and at-Tirmidhi)¹²⁷

In the noble Qur'an, Allah ordered His Messenger (ﷺ) to establish the tahajjud prayers so that he may be raised to a high station of praise and glory:

﴿وَمِنَ اللَّيْلِ فَتَهَجَّدْ بِهِ نَافِلَةً لَّكَ عَسَىٰ أَن يَبْعَثَكَ رَبُّكَ مَقَامًا مَّحْمُودًا﴾

(سورة الإسراء: ٧٩)

«And from [part of] the night, pray with it as additional [worship] for you; it is expected that your Lord will resurrect you to a praised station.»¹²⁸

(Qur'an 17: 79)

¹²⁷ Quoted in al-Awaayishah, *The Prayer*, 48-49.

¹²⁸ 'a praised station': a position of intercession by Allah's permission and the highest degree in paradise.

The prayer for a need (*ṣalât ul-ḥâjah*)

This is the prayer for an individual who has a need to be fulfilled; it was the practice of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) that whenever he had a problem or a need, he would resort to ṣalâh and seek Allah's help through prayer.

‘Abdullâh ibn Awfâ narrated that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

Whoever has a need from Allah or from one of the sons of Adam, let him perform ablution, performing it well, then pray two raka'ât (units of prayer), then praise Allah and send ṣalâh upon the Prophet (ﷺ). Then let him say:

Lâ ilâha illâ Allâh al-Ḥaleem al-Kareem. Subḥân Allâhi rabbil-'arshil-'adheem. Alḥamdu lillâhi rabbil-'âlameen. As'aluka moojibâti rahmatika wa 'azâ'ima maghfiratika, wal-ghaneemata min kulli birrin, was-salâmata min kulli ithmin. Lâ tadâ' lee dhanban illâ ghafartahu, wa lâ hamman illâ farrajtahu, wa lâ ḥâjatan hiya laka riḍan illâ qadaytahâ, yâ Arḥamar-Râhimeen.

(None has the right to be worshipped in truth but Allah, the Forbearing, the Generous. Glory be to Allah, Lord of the magnificent throne. All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds. I ask You for what warrants Your mercy, and what will determine Your forgiveness, and the spoils (fruits) of every righteous deed, and safety from every sin. Do not leave a sin for me without forgiving it, or a worry without relieving it, or a need that pleases you without granting it. O Most Merciful of those who have mercy.) (A weak hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi and Ibn Mâjah)

«It was narrated from 'Uthmân ibn Ḥunayf (رضي الله عنه) that a blind man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and requested: Pray to Allah to heal me.

He responded: If you wish to store your rewards for the hereafter, it is better. But if you wish, I will supplicate for you.

He said: Make the supplication.

He told him to perform ablution and do it well, and then to pray two units and say this supplication:

Allâhumma inni as'aluka wa âtawajjahu ilayka bi-Nabiyyika Muḥammadin nabiyy ar-raḥmah. Yâ Muḥammadu inni âtawajjahu bika ilâ rabbee fee ḥâjati li taqḍi. Allâhumma shaffi 'hu fîyâ.

(O Allah, I ask of You and I turn my face towards You by virtue of the intercession of Prophet Muhammad, the Prophet of mercy. O Muhammad, I have turned to my Lord by virtue of your intercession concerning this need of mine so that it may be met. O Allah, accept his intercession concerning me.)» (A sound hadith recorded by Ibn Mâjah)

Whenever some hardship or difficulty befell the Prophet (ﷺ), he sought solace through prayer; in fact, it has been related that the delight of his eye — his greatest pleasure — was prayer. The Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) taught his Companions many voluntary acts of worship so that they could increase their connection with their Lord and subsequently enjoy inner peace. Prayer is the best weapon at one's disposal for unburdening oneself from anxiety and worries.¹²⁹

Moreover, Allah has expressly ordered the believers to always seek His help whenever they have any need through ṣalâh, which by implication means *ṣalât ul-hâjah*:

¹²⁹ 'Ali Muhammad as-Sallaabee, *The Noble Life of The Prophet (peace be upon him)* (Riyadh: Darussalam, 2005), 283-284.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ﴾ (١٥٣)

(سورة البقرة: ١٥٣)

«O you who have believed, seek help through patience and prayer. Indeed, Allah is with the ones who are patient.» (Qur'an 2: 153)

The forenoon prayer (*ṣalât uḍ-ḍuḥa'*)

This is yet another light, optional prayer which can be performed from any time after the sun has risen until a few minutes before noon. It is a means of increasing one's faith and gaining many rewards from Allah (ﷻ). Similar to other forms of optional prayers, it is performed two units at a time. One can pray from two up to twelve units of prayer.

It was narrated that 'Abdur-Raḥmân ibn Abi Laylâ said:

«No one told me that he saw the Prophet (ﷺ) praying *ṣalât uḍ-ḍuḥa'* except Umm Hâni. She narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) entered her house on the day of the conquest of Makkah and prayed eight units.

I have never seen him offer any prayer that was briefer (lighter) than that, but he bowed and prostrated perfectly.» (Muslim and at-Tirmidhi)

Abu Dharr (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Every morning, each joint of the son of Adam is obligated to give charity. His giving greetings of peace to whom he meets is charity; his commanding (others) to do good is charity; his prohibiting them from evil is charity; removing harm from the way is charity; and his (intercourse) with his wife is charity. The two units of *ṣalât uḍ-ḍuḥa'* will suffice all these (acts).» (Muslim and Abu Dâwood)

Husayn al-Awaayishah has quoted a number of hadiths in his rare and beautiful book with respect to the virtues of ṣalât uḍ-ḍuḥâ'. Two of these are as follows:

It is established from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that he said:

«Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) sent an army; they captured a great amount of war booty and returned quickly. A man said: O Allah's Messenger! We have never seen an army return more quickly or take a greater amount of war booty than this army.

He said: Shall I not inform you of the one who is quicker in returning and takes a larger booty? This is a man who makes ablution and perfects it, and then goes off to the mosque and prays the fajr prayer. If he follows it up with ṣalât uḍ-ḍuḥâ', he is quicker in returning and takes a larger booty.» (Recorded by al-Bazzâr and Ibn Ḥibbân, and authenticated by al-Albâni)

Abu ad-Dardâ' (رضي الله عنه) reported from the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) that he said:

«Whoever prays ṣalât uḍ-ḍuḥâ' as two units will not be written amongst the negligent. Whoever prays four will be written among the worshippers. Whoever prays six will be given sufficiency for that day. Whoever prays eight will be written among the obedient servants by Allah. For the one who prays all twelve units, Allah will build a house in paradise. There is no day or night except that Allah showers extra favours upon His servants, and Allah has not favoured any one of His servants with anything better than the fact that He guides him to His remembrance.» (Recorded by aṭ-Ṭabarâni with a reliable chain of narrators; it was also authenticated by al-Albâni)¹³⁰

¹³⁰ Quoted in al-Awaayishah, *The Prayer*, 64-65.

The supererogatory prayers before and after the compulsory *ṣalâh* (*ṣalât ul-qabliyah wal-ba'diyah*)

These are voluntary prayers also known as *ar-rawâtib*. They constitute a total of twelve units prayed immediately before and after the five daily obligatory prayers. Their purpose is to prepare oneself for the obligatory prayers and to make up for any weakness that may occur therein.

‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Whoever is regular with the twelve units of sunnah (prayer), Allah will build a house for him in paradise: four units before dhuhr, two after it, two after maghrib, two after ‘ishâ, and two before fajr.» (Muslim and at-Tirmidhi)

It was narrated from Tameem ad-Dâri that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«The first thing for which a person will be brought to account on the Day of Resurrection will be his prayer. If it is complete, the voluntary (prayers) will also be recorded for him (as an increase). If it is not complete, Allah will say to His angels: Look and see whether you find any voluntary prayers for My slave, and take them to make up for what is lacking from his obligatory prayers. Then all his deeds will be reckoned in a similar manner.» (A sound hadith recorded by Ibn Mâjah)

Greeting the mosque

Upon entering any mosque, it was the Sunnah of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) to offer two units of voluntary prayer as a token of respect

to the House of Allah¹³¹ before sitting down. Therefore, these are two units of prayer performed whenever one enters the mosque, before sitting down. The Prophet (ﷺ) is reported to have said:

«When one of you enters the mosque, let him pray two units before he sits down.» (Muslim and at-Tirmidhi)

Muslim scholars have said that the etiquette and honour of the mosque necessitates that when a person enters it, he or she should offer two units of prayer before sitting down. If one mistakenly sits before performing the two units, he or she should get up and perform them.

It was narrated that Abu Qatâdah, the Companion of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), said:

«I entered the mosque, and Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was sitting among the people, so I sat down.

Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) asked: What kept you from praying two units before you sat down?

I replied: O Messenger of Allah, I saw you sitting and the people sitting.

He instructed: When one of you enters the mosque, let him not sit down until he has prayed two units.» (Muslim)

It was narrated that Jâbir ibn 'Abdullâh (رضي الله عنه) said:

«Sulayk al-Ghaṭafâni came on Friday when Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) was preaching, and he sat down. The Prophet (ﷺ) said to him: Sulayk, get up and pray two units and make them brief. Then he said: If one of you comes on

¹³¹ In Islam, 'House of Allah' means a building or house reserved for the worship of Allah. It does not mean that is the abode where Allah dwells or that He has a special graded presence in it, because Allah is present everywhere by His knowledge and power. He is omnipresent; He sees and hears everything in the whole universe. (Author)

Friday, and the imam is preaching, let him pray two units and make them brief.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

The *witr* prayer: the final prayer of the night (*ṣalât ul-witr*)

Witr prayer is the final optional night prayer. The word ‘witr’ literally means an odd number, and the number of units of prayer must be odd: one, three, five or more. If one is not sure that one can wake up to pray tahajjud, he or she can pray it before sleeping, but the one who firmly intends to wake up for night prayer should wait and pray *witr* upon waking later in the night. The *witr* prayer was highly recommended by Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ).

‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated:

«Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) offered *witr* prayer at various hours of the night, extending (from) the ‘ishâ’ prayer up to the last hour of the night.» (Bukhari)

‘Â’ishah (رضي الله عنها) also narrated:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) used to offer his night prayer while I was sleeping across in his bed. Whenever he intended to offer the *witr* prayer, he used to wake me up and I would offer the *witr* prayer too.» (Bukhari)

‘Abdullâh ibn Umar (رضي الله عنهما) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«Make *witr* your last (prayer) of the night.» (Bukhari)

It was narrated from Abu Ayyoob al-Anṣârî (رضي الله عنه) that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Witr is Allah’s right. Whoever wishes, let him pray *witr* with five (units), and whoever wishes, let him pray *witr* with three (units), and whoever wishes, let him pray *witr* with one (unit).» (A sound hadith recorded by Ibn Mâjah)

It was narrated that Abu Sa‘eed said: Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Pray witr before morning comes.» (A sound hadith recorded by Ibn Mâjah)

According to the hadith of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ), the correct witr is before dawn. However, if one had intended to perform the night prayer, but overslept until fajr or forgot to perform witr, it is permissible to perform it either after fajr prayer or any other time of the day when one remembers.

It was narrated that Abu Sa‘eed said: Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Whoever sleeps and misses witr or forgets it, let him pray it when morning comes or when he remembers.» (A sound hadith recorded by Ibn Mâjah)

It was narrated that Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) said:

«My dearest friend [meaning Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ)] advised me (to do) three things: to sleep after praying witr, to fast three days each month, and to pray two units of fajr.» (A sound hadith recorded by an-Nasâ’i)

It was narrated that Qays ibn Taql said:

«My father, Taql ibn ‘Ali, visited me one day in Ramadan and stayed with us until evening. He led us in praying qi-yâm that night and prayed witr with us. Then he went down to a mosque and led his companions in prayer until only witr was left. Then he told a man to go forward and said to him: Lead them in witr, for I heard Allah’s Messenger say: There should not be two witr in one night.» (A sound hadith recorded by an-Nasâ’i)

Chapter Sixteen

Frequently-asked questions (FAQs)

Q1. How does one join the congregational ṣalâh when the imam has started the prayer and one unit has already been completed?

A1. It is recommended to join the congregation irrespective of the posture of the imam as long as one recites the takbeer (says Allâhu akbar) first. Then one should assume the posture of the imam. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) advised that if one discovers that the congregational prayer has begun, one should not run or rush to catch up with the imam in a certain posture. Rather, one is required to proceed calmly and join the prayer without rushing or hurrying. Whatever we catch of the prayer will be what was decreed for us by Allah.

It was narrated from Abu Hurayrah (رضي الله عنه) that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«When (the iqâmah for) prayer is called, do not come rushing; rather, come in a tranquil manner. Pray whatever you catch and complete whatever you miss. When any of you is heading towards prayer, he is in a state of prayer.»
(Muslim)

One is counted to have caught a unit of prayer if one finds the imam still bowing, before he has raised his head.

However, if the imam has already raised his head after bowing or one finds him in prostration, then one is considered to have missed that particular unit.

For instance, if you join the congregation when the imam has already finished the first unit of the maghrib prayer, you follow the imam until he makes the tasleem to end the prayer. You do not make the tasleem with him, since your prayer is not yet complete. (At this point, you have only completed two units of prayer.) After he has ended his prayer, you stand up and complete the unit you missed. After that, you sit for the long tashahhud, recite the taḥiyât, and then make the tasleem to finish your prayer. Again, after bowing and prostrating twice, you will sit for the final long tashahhud, recite the long taḥiyât,¹³² and then make the tasleem and end your prayer.

Q2. Is a group of women allowed to perform sunnah (optional) prayers in congregation?

A2. Based on many hadiths, the scholars have concluded that women should not be prohibited from attending the congregational prayers in the mosque provided they observe proper hijab (Islamic clothing) and do not perfume themselves. Hence, if women are allowed to perform the obligatory congregational prayers in the mosque, then they are also allowed to perform some of the sunnah prayers which are performed in congregation such as the tarâweeh prayers, ṣalât al-kusoof and khusoof, and so on behind a male imam.

It is also permissible for women to perform such congregational prayers led by another woman in their homes or else-

¹³² taḥiyât: *lit.* greeting: a formula recited in the sitting position of the prayer that contains words that indicate the glorification of Allah, His eternal existence, His perfection, and His sovereignty.

where. It has been authentically narrated that both ‘Â’ishah (ﷺ) and Umm Salamah (ﷺ) led other women in congregational prayers.

However, a female imam leading other women in prayer does not stand in front of them as is usually the case with a man leading the prayer. Rather, she stands in the middle of the first row.

In addition to what has been answered in this question, it is important to know first and foremost that the best ṣalâh of a woman, whether it is obligatory or optional, is inside her home, as reported from Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ).

‘Abdullâh ibn Mas‘ood (ﷺ) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«The prayer of a woman in (a room in the middle section of) her house is better than her prayer in her outer room, and her prayer in her inner room is better than her prayer in (a middle room of) her house.» (Recorded by Abu Dâwood)¹³³

Nevertheless, the Prophet (ﷺ) allowed women to perform congregational ṣalâh in the mosque with men. During his lifetime, women used to perform even the fajr prayers behind the men in his mosque in Madinah. However, women would leave the mosque before men in such a way that men could not see their faces or recognize them.

‘Â’ishah (ﷺ) narrated:

«The believing women, covered with their veiling sheets, used to attend the fajr prayer with Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ).

¹³³ This hadith has been called weak, but Ibn Khuzaymah, Ibn Hîbbân, and al-Hâkim, as supported by Imâm adh-Dhahabi, have all declared it reliable, adding that it has many witnesses among narrators. Allah knows best.

After finishing the ṣalâh, they would return to their homes and nobody would recognize them because of darkness.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«If your women ask permission to go to the mosque at night, allow them.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

Sâleem ibn ‘Abdullâh reported from his father that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«If the wife of any one of you asks permission (to go to the mosque), do not forbid her.» (Bukhari)

Umm Salamah (رضي الله عنها) narrated:

«When Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) completed the ṣalâh with the tasleem, the women used to get up immediately, and Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) would remain at his place for some time before getting up. (The sub-narrator [az-Zuhri] said: We think, and Allah knows better, that he did this so the women could leave before the men caught up with them).» (Bukhari and Muslim)

Ibn ‘Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported:

«One of the wives of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭâb used to offer the fajr and the ‘ishâ’ prayers in congregation in the mosque. She was asked why she had come out for the ṣalâh knowing that ‘Umar disliked it and he had great gheerah.

She replied: What prevented him from stopping me from this act?

The other replied: This statement of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) prevents him: Do not stop Allah’s maidservants from going to Allah’s mosques.» (Bukhari)

It was narrated from Ibn ‘Umar that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Do not prevent women from going to the mosque at night.

A son of ‘Abdullâh ibn ‘Umar said: We will not let them go out lest it lead to mischief and suspicion.

Ibn ‘Umar rebuked him and said: I say Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said and you say: We will not let them!» (Muslim)

It was narrated from Bushr ibn Sa‘eed that Zaynab ath-Thaqafiyah used to narrate that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«If one of you (women) wants to attend ‘ishâ’ (prayer), let her not put on perfume that night.» (Muslim)

It was reported that Zaynab, wife of ‘Abdullâh, said that Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said to them:

«If one of you goes to the mosque, let her not touch perfume.» (Muslim)

Q3. An individual, out of negligence or laziness or any other non-Sharia-based reason, misses two or more daily obligatory congregational prayers. When he arrives at the mosque, he finds that the next obligatory prayer (following the ones he missed) has just begun. How does such a person make up for the missed prayers?

A3. The act of making up prayers that were missed (whether intentionally or unintentionally) is known in Arabic as *qaḍâ’*. Missing ṣalâh deliberately is sinful and is categorized as an act of disbelief. Thus, missing ṣalâh without any valid Sharia-based reason requires one to repent and mend one’s ways prior to making up the missed prayers. One must pledge to stop the habit of missing the prayers. Then one must make up all of them.

The Islamic ruling for making up missed prayers is that the sequence of the prayers must be followed. For instance, two individuals miss ḍuḥr and arrive at the mosque when the

imam has already started leading ‘aṣr and has finished one unit. The individuals will join the prayer in the second unit and make the intention of praying ḍhuhr, even though the imam and the others are performing ‘aṣr. Once the imam has finished the prayer, the two individuals will stand up to complete the first, missed unit of prayer. Only then will they give the tasleem, which ends their prayer. Then they will make a fresh iqâmah for the ‘aṣr prayer and perform its four units.

Similarly, if you come to the mosque when the imam has begun leading the maghrib prayer, but you have missed both the ḍhuhr and ‘aṣr prayers, then again you must follow the sequence of prayers as they are normally performed. You join the maghrib congregational prayers, but with the intention of performing the ḍhuhr prayer. When the imam gives the tasleem to finish the prayer, you stand up to complete your ḍhuhr prayer, which comprises four units. After you have ended that prayer with the tasleem, you make the iqâmah and perform four units of ‘aṣr prayer. After you have ended that with the tasleem, you stand up to give another iqâmah and perform the maghrib prayer, which comprises three units. This ruling is based on the fatwa given by the Muslim scholar Ibn Jibreen.¹³⁴

Q4. A man is in the mosque and the time for ḍhuhr or ‘aṣr ṣalâh has arrived. He intends to perform the prayer individually because he is in a hurry to go somewhere. While performing the prayer, the iqâmah for congregational prayer is made. He has completed only two or three units of that prayer. Now what does he have to do?

A4. First of all, if the call for prayer is made while a man is inside or around the precincts of the mosque, he is not allowed to

¹³⁴ al-Musnad, *Fatawa Islamiyah*, 2:241-242.

leave without praying in congregation. This is based on the Prophet's lifestyle with respect to ṣalâh, as narrated in the following hadith:

It was narrated that Abu ash-Sha'thâ said:

«We were sitting in the mosque with Abu Hurayrah when the mu'adh-dhin called the adhân. A man stood up and walked out of the mosque. Abu Hurayrah's gaze followed him until he exited the mosque. Abu Hurayrah said: This man has disobeyed Abul-Qâsim (Prophet Muhammad [ﷺ]).» (Muslim, at-Tirmidhi, and Ibn Mâjah)

Therefore it is not permissible to leave the mosque after the adhân has been called. However, according to Imam Tirmidhi, an-Nasâ'i, and others, this rule can be relaxed only if the excuse for leaving the mosque is valid: that is, anything for which it is very necessary to leave the mosque. Such excuses can include relieving oneself, being without ablution, going out to another mosque to call the adhân or lead prayers, and so on. In these circumstances, leaving the mosque after the adhân is allowed.

If a man has started performing his individual prayer, and before he finishes, the iqâmah is made and the imam starts leading the congregational prayer, then this person must hasten to finish his individual obligatory prayer and join the congregational prayer. This is because the congregational prayer takes precedence over the individual prayer; it is twenty-five or twenty-seven times better in degree. Meanwhile, the prayer the person had already prayed will be counted as a voluntary or optional prayer and will be duly rewarded. One cannot leave the mosque, thinking that the individual obligatory prayer has been performed, just because he is in a hurry to leave. The congregational prayer going on cannot be abandoned. Allah knows best.

Q5. Is it allowed for a group of people who arrive late for ṣalâh, or who are travelling, to pray in their own congregation if the imam has already finished leading the main congregational prayer in the mosque?

A5. It is strongly encouraged to have only one main congregational prayer in the mosque. However, there are occasions when Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) instructed an individual who had already performed the main congregational prayer to join in congregation with a person who had come late for prayer and was praying alone. This was in order to enable the latecomer to reap the reward of congregational prayer.

Abu Sa'eed (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«A man came when Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) had already prayed. He asked: Which of you will give some reward to this person?

A man stood to pray with him.» (A sound hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)

A similar hadith was narrated by Abu Sa'eed al-Khudri (رضي الله عنه) that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) saw a person praying by himself (alone). He said:

«Is there not a person who will give him charity by praying with him?» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâ-wood)

Abu 'Eesâ at-Tirmidhi states that it is the opinion of more than one Companion of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) and of their successors (those who knew or met any of the Companions and transmitted hadiths from them) that there is no objection if a group of believers forms a second congregation in a mosque where the prayer has already been held. Imam Aḥmad held the same view.

However, a majority of other scholars including Sufyân, Ibn Mubârak, Imam Mâlik, and Imam ash-Shâfi‘i disagree. They are of the view that those who arrive at the mosque when the main congregational prayer is over should perform prayers individually. They expressed this view because they feared that making a second congregation would spread disunity and encourage strife, thereby giving the followers of certain sects an excuse to arrive late at the mosque so that they might establish a second congregation and pray behind an imam who agrees with the teachings of their sect and their innovations. Therefore, to close this door to division and to prevent people of other sects from achieving their evil aims, these scholars held the view that one should not offer the obligatory prayers in congregation in the mosque after a main congregation has prayed with the regular imam.

Therefore, this issue is an open one. One can choose either ruling, considering that both sides have the support of a great number of scholars based on the statements of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ), and there is no doubt that praying in congregation is part of fearing Allah and obeying the Sharia.¹³⁵

- Q6. How is one supposed to stand in the rows in ṣalâh behind the imam? Is it with little gaps in between each other, or should it be without any gaps whatsoever between one another?
- A6. According to what has been narrated from the Companions of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ), the believers are supposed to stand in rows, shoulder to shoulder and foot to foot, touching each other and ensuring that their rows are straight and no gaps are left in between, regardless of whether they are men’s or women’s rows. This was the practice of the Companions; they straightened their rows and stood close to each other during the time of Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ).

¹³⁵ al-Musnad, *Fatawa Islamiyah*, 2:330-331.

Nu'mân ibn Basheer (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:
«Straighten your rows or Allah will alter your faces.»
(Bukhari)

Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«Once the iqâmah was pronounced and Allah's Messenger faced us and said: Straighten your rows and stand closer together, for I see you from behind my back.» (Bukhari)

«Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) also narrated that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:
Straighten your rows because the straightening of the rows is essential for a perfect and correct prayer.» (Bukhari)

Nu'mân ibn Basheer (رضي الله عنه) said:

«I saw that every one of us used to put his heel with the heel of his companion (in ṣalâh).» (Bukhari)

«Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:
Straighten your rows, for I see you from behind my back.

Anas added: Every one of us used to put his shoulder with the shoulder of his companion and his foot with the foot of his companion.» (Bukhari)

It was narrated that Abu Mas'ood (رضي الله عنه) said:

«Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) used to touch our shoulders when we were standing for prayers, and he would say: Make the rows straight and do not differ, lest your hearts differ. Let those who are most wise and intellectual be closest to me, then those who come after them, then those who come after them.

Abu Mas'ood said: But today there is a great deal of discord.» (Muslim)

Nu'mân ibn Basheer (رضي الله عنه) said:

«Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) would straighten our lines. One day, he came out and saw a man whose chest was protrud-

ing from the people. He said: You must straighten your lines, or Allah will cause disagreement to occur among your faces.» (A sound hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)

Imam an-Nawawi (may Allah have mercy on him) explains that the disagreement that may occur among the faces indicates enmity, hatred, and dissention that occurs in the hearts. It is sad to note that in the current day and age, the issue of straightening the rows is given very little attention or importance. It is handled with extreme carelessness and negligence. Because of that, there is an increase of mutual grudges, enmity, disputes, and disruptions among the Muslims.

This issue is so important that there are many narrations reported from Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) with regard to straightening the rows and closing up the gaps between one another in such a way that no gap is left in between people who are lined up for prayers. Otherwise, Satan is likely to come in between and cause discord to develop in the hearts.

Al-Barâ' ibn 'Âzib reported:

«Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) would enter between the rows from one side to the other (from the furthest rows to the front rows). He would touch our chests and shoulders and say: Do not differ; else your hearts will differ.

He would also say: Allah and His angels send their blessings on the front rows.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

'Abdullâh ibn 'Umar (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Perfect (straighten) the rows. Stand shoulder to shoulder and leave no gaps; be gentle with the arms of your brothers, and do not leave gaps for Satan. Whoever connects a

row,¹³⁶ Allah will connect him (with His mercy), and whoever severs a row, Allah will sever (His mercy) from him. Abu Dâwood (the collector of the hadith) said: The meaning of: ‘Be gentle with the arms of your brothers’ is that if a person comes to a row and wishes to enter it, then every person should ease (make space) for him so that he can stand in the row.» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

The celebrated scholar, the late Aḥmad Deedât (may Allah have mercy on him), states that the Satan mentioned in the aforementioned hadith is not the physical one. Rather, it refers to the confusion and misunderstanding which arises as a result of one harbouring a feeling of superiority (due to pride, wealth, or racial differences) over one’s companions during ṣalâh.¹³⁷

This important ingredient of ṣalâh, which acts as a factor in strengthening the unity and brotherhood among Muslims, has been largely ignored in spite of all the narrations reported from Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) and the continuous calls and reminders by imams for people to straighten their rows and close the gaps between them.

¹³⁶ The English translators of *Sunan Abu Dâwood* have commented on the phrase: ‘Whoever connects a row’. This means whoever comes or moves to fill up the gap in the row and completes it. The phrase: ‘Be gentle with the arms of your brothers’ means that if any people come to a row and wish to enter it, every person should ease (give space) to them with their shoulders so that they can stand in the row. It also means that if there is really no space in the row or it is squeezed too much, one should not try to enter it by force and create an uneasy situation for one’s brothers or sisters already in the row. (Author)

¹³⁷ Ahmed Deedat, “Christian Guests in Your Mosque” (lecture, Jumu‘ah Masjid, Durban, South Africa, 1985).

The gaps that are constantly left within the rows during one's ṣalâh are the places where the Satan likes to stand and cause discord among the worshippers.

Anas ibn Mâlik (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

«Line yourselves up tightly, and be close together, and make (your) necks straight (in one line). I swear by Him in Whose Hands is my soul, I see Satan enter between the gaps in the rows as if he were a small black goat.» (A sound hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

Q7. What is the ruling on the ṣalâh of those who are praying and an animal (like a dog or cat) passes in front of them or a child passes in front of them?

A7. It has been authentically narrated from Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) that angels do not enter a house in which there are dogs. Hence, those who pray in a house in which there are dogs will be depriving themselves of the rewards and blessings brought by the angels. Furthermore, if a dog licks one's clothes or body with its tongue or nose while one is praying, that ṣalâh will be invalidated because the dog makes the clothes and body impure. It has been confirmed that one's ṣalâh is not invalidated if any animal or being passes in front of him or her during prayer, unless it is a black dog, a donkey, or a woman.

«Abu Dharr (رضي الله عنه) reported that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said:

When a man performs ṣalâh and there is nothing like the post of a saddle or a camel saddle (in front of him), his ṣalâh is severed by (the passing of) a black dog, a woman, and a donkey.

It was said to Abu Dharr: What is the problem with the black dog rather than the red or white dog?

He said: O my nephew! I asked Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) just as you have asked me.

He said: The black dog is a devil.» (A sound hadith recorded by at-Tirmidhi)

It was narrated from 'Abdullâh ibn aṣ-Ṣâmit from Abu Dharr (رضي الله عنه) that:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) said: The prayer is severed by a woman, a donkey, and a black dog, if there is not something like a handle of a saddle in front of a man.

I ('Abdullâh) asked: What is wrong with a black dog and not a red one?

He (Abu Dharr) replied: I asked the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) the same question and he said: The black dog is a devil.» (A sound hadith recorded by Ibn Mâjah)

'Â'ishah (رضي الله عنها) narrated:

«Do you make us (women) equal to dogs and donkeys? While I used to lie in my bed, the Prophet (ﷺ) would come and offer ṣalâh facing the middle of the bed. I did not consider it as good to be in front of him in his ṣalâh, so I used to slip away slowly and quietly from the foot of the bed until I got out of my blanket.» (Bukhari)

Generally speaking, it is not only strongly discouraged but in fact forbidden to pass in front of a person who is praying if there is no barrier¹³⁸ in front of him or her.

Bushr ibn Sa'eed reported that Zayd ibn Khâlid (رضي الله عنه) sent him to Abi Juhaym to ask him what he had heard from Allah's

¹³⁸ The barrier is an object like a pillar, wall, stick, spear, or the like. Its height should not be less than one foot, and it should be in front of the person offering ṣalâh. It acts as a symbolic barrier between him or her and the others. (Author)

Messenger (ﷺ) about a person passing in front of another person who was offering ṣalâh. Abu Juhaym replied that: «Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) said: If the person who passes in front of another person in ṣalâh knew the magnitude of his sin, he would prefer to wait for 'forty' rather than to pass in front of him.

Abu an-Nadr (one of the narrators) said: I don't know if he said forty days, months, or years.» (Bukhari and at-Tirmidhi)

‘Awn ibn Juhayfa narrated:

«I heard my father saying: The Prophet (ﷺ) led us and offered a two-unit *ḍhuhr* ṣalâh and then a two-unit ‘aṣr ṣalâh at al-Bathâ with a spear (planted) in front of him (as a barrier) while women and donkeys were passing in front of him (beyond that spear).» (Bukhari)

In conclusion, there are divergent views among the Muslim scholars as to whether or not the ṣalâh is severed by the passing of dogs, donkeys, or women in front of a praying person. A section of the scholars believes that they do sever the prayer, as is evident from the words of aforementioned hadiths taken at face value.

The second view is that the passing of the above mentioned only diminishes the quality of the prayer because of the distraction in concentration and devotion.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ For more details on what to do if a child passes in front of the praying person, refer to the following: Islam Q&A, "Ruling on child passing in front of one who is praying," *Islam-QA.com*, <http://www.islam-qa.com/en/ref/103427/> (accessed April 6, 2012). Islam Q&A, "Her child disturbs her when she prays," *Islam-QA.com*, <http://www.islam-qa.com/en/ref/5485/> (accessed April 6, 2012). Islam Q&A, "When should a child be stopped from passing in front of a person who is praying?" *Islam-QA.com*, <http://www.islam-qa.com/en/ref/20199/> (accessed April 6, 2012).

Q8. What is the ruling on ṣalâh performed in a place where there are sculptures, statues, photographs, pictures, books with pictures, pets, painted curtains, carved pictures, and so on?

A8. The presence of the aforementioned items does not directly invalidate the ṣalâh. However, such items definitely distract a person and divert his or her concentration from the ṣalâh. Thus, they diminish the rewards of the ṣalâh. One also misses the supplications of the angels of mercy who frequent Muslim homes that are free of the aforementioned items.

‘Uthmân ibn Ṭalḥah (رضي الله عنه) reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) called him after he entered the Kaaba and said to him:

«I saw the horns of a ram as I entered the House, and I forgot to order you to cover them. Cover them, because it is not fitting that there should be anything in the House which distracts the worshipper.» (Recorded by Aḥmad with a reliable chain of narrators)

Anas (رضي الله عنه) narrated:

«‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) had a thin, marked woollen curtain with which she had screened one side of her home.

The Prophet (ﷺ) said: Take away this curtain of yours, as its pictures are still displayed in front of me during my ṣalâh (that is, they divert my attention from the ṣalâh).» (Bukhari)

Thus the Prophet (ﷺ) ordered for the horns to be covered and the blanket to be removed, which clearly indicates that these things distract the worshippers from their ṣalâh but they do not invalidate it. This is because there is no authentic hadith reported from Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) stating clearly that he stopped his ṣalâh because of pictures or sculptures of animate objects.

It was narrated from ‘Ā’ishah (رضي الله عنها) that she bought a cushion on which there were some images (animals). When Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) saw it, he stood at the door and did not enter. She recognized (or it was recognized) displeasure in his face. She asked:

«O Allah’s Messenger! I ask Allah’s and His Messenger’s forgiveness, what wrong have I done?

Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) asked: What is this pillow?

She replied: I bought it for you to sit and recline on.

Allah’s Messenger (ﷺ) said: The makers of these images will be punished and it will be said to them: Bring to life that which you have created.

Then he said: The house in which there are images is not entered by the angels.» (Bukhari and Muslim)

Therefore, our houses should be decorated with what is within the limits sanctioned by the Sharia and with what is pleasing to Allah (ﷻ). However, because of a lack of Islamic upbringing and the onslaught of Western and non-Islamic influences, many Muslim homes today are full of images that are unacceptable according to the words of the Messenger of Allah (ﷺ). Many Muslim homes are filled with statues or pictures of animate things such as animals, birds, and human beings, or have dogs living in them as pets — all of which are clearly forbidden. Do we wish to be void of the supplications of the angels in our homes? Do we prefer these images and diminish the rewards of our ṣalâh?¹⁴⁰

Sulaym’s father narrated:

«Once Gabriel promised to visit the Prophet (ﷺ), but he delayed and the Prophet (ﷺ) grew worried. At last he

¹⁴⁰ Ondigo, *Forty Hadiths on Poisonous Social Habits*, 288; also see 289-291.

came out and found Gabriel and complained to him of his grief (for his delay).

Gabriel said to him: We do not enter a place in which there is a picture (of animate objects) or a dog.» (Bukhari)

Q9. How can a person perform ṣalâh in a room where there is a lot of filth like urine or places such as hospitals, prisons, and houses where toilets and bathrooms are very close to the place of ṣalâh?

A9. One of the seven conditions of ṣalâh is purity and cleanliness of our bodies, thoughts, beliefs, clothes, places of prayer, and so on. Islam highly recommends cleanliness and discourages laziness. Therefore, it is the duty of Muslims to try their best to locate the cleanest spot in such places of filth or to wipe and clear any filth or urine around the place and perform ṣalâh. The Prophet (ﷺ) said:

«The key to prayer is purification. Its sacredness (begins) with the takbeer, and its release is the tasleem (which ends the prayer).» (A reliable hadith recorded by Abu Dâwood)

There is no excuse at all for not performing prayers just because the toilet is directly in front of the place of ṣalâh or because a person is in a prison or a hospital. The whole earth was made pure and a place of prayer, according to the following hadith of Allah's Messenger (ﷺ), in which Jâbir ibn 'Abdullâh (رضي الله عنه) reported:

«The Prophet (ﷺ) said: I have been given five (things) which were not given to anyone else before me... The earth has been made for me (and for my followers) a place for offering ṣalâh and a thing that purifies (to perform tayammum), so any one of my followers can offer ṣalâh wherever he is at the time of ṣalâh...» (Bukhari)

Summary and conclusion

The subject of ṣalâh is a vast one that cannot be covered adequately in a small work such as this one, which deals only with the seven essential conditions. Hence, what has been compiled in this work does not cover all the issues about ṣalâh.

It would only be fair to use this as a starting point to learn more about ṣalâh — the most important act of worship in Islam. Thus, every Muslim who wants to learn more about ṣalâh is advised to go back to the various books of Hadith, especially the six authentic compilations¹⁴¹ that contain every issue about ṣalâh that Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) taught to His Companions and subsequently passed on to the Muslim Ummah. Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) is reported to have said:

«Pray as you have seen me pray.» (Bukhari)

Many times, Muslims complain about their weak and subjugated situation in the world whether political, economic, technological, mental, social, or military. At times, many resort to blaming others, especially the western nations. Some even resort to unacceptable means to regain the Ummah's past glory and power. In reality, the source of our weakness is a lack of proper understanding and implementation of Islam, especially in our relationship with Allah (ﷻ). A better relationship with Allah, individually

¹⁴¹ the six authentic compilations of hadiths by Bukhari, Muslim, Ibn Mâjah, Abu Dâwood, at-Tirmidhi, and an-Nasâ'i.

and collectively, is only possible if we worship Allah correctly and establish ṣalâh based on correct Islamic knowledge rather than treat it as a cultural or traditional ritual without understanding what we are doing in it.

It is hoped that this small book on ṣalâh has given you some idea as to how to establish it correctly, enabling you — even if you are the newest of Muslims — to learn it in the shortest time possible and establish it with ease. If you are able to achieve that, then the time and effort in writing this book has been well spent; inshallah, it has not been wasted.

We pray to Allah to accept this small work and make our scale of good deeds heavy on the Day of Resurrection, expiating our sins and protecting us from the hellfire, âmeen.

The final words are in accordance with the glorious Qur'an and the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ):

﴿... وَمَا تَوْفِيقِي إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ تَوَكَّلْتُ وَإِلَيْهِ أُنِيبُ﴾ (سورة هود: ٨٨)

﴿...And my success is not but through Allah. Upon Him I have relied, and to Him I return.﴾ (Qur'an 11: 88)

All praise is for Allah, by Whose favour good works are accomplished.¹⁴²

¹⁴² Sa'eed ibn Ali ibn Wahf al-Qahtaani, *Fortification of the Muslim Through Remembrance and Supplication from the Qur'an and Sunnah* (Jeddah: Dar al-Khair Islamic Book Publisher, 1998), 273-274; this supplication was recorded by Ibn as-Sunni and al-Hâkim and declared authentic.

Appendix 1:

Selected soorahs from the Qur'an

Following is the first soorah of the Qur'an, known as al-Fâtiḥah, along with the last twelve short soorahs in the thirtieth and final part of the noble Qur'an. One can memorize them for recitation in the five daily compulsory prayers and others.

Soorat al-Fâtiḥah (1: The Opening)

1. Bismillâh ir-Raḥmân ir-Raḥeem¹⁴³
2. Alḥamdulillâhi rabbil-‘âlameen
3. Ar-Raḥmân ir-Raḥeem
4. Mâliki yawm id-deen
5. Iyyâka na‘budu wa iyyâka nasta‘een
6. Ihdinaş-şirâṭ al-mustaqeem
7. Şirâṭ aladheena an‘amta ‘alayhim, ghayril-maghḍoobi ‘alayhim wa laḍ-ḍâlleen

¹⁴³ It should be noted that Soorat al-Fâtiḥah is the only soorah in the Qur'an whose first verse is *Bismillâhir-Raḥmân ir-Raḥeem*. Although this phrase is read before the other soorahs (the only exception being Soorat *at-Tawbah*), it is not actually counted as a verse except in Soorat al-Fâtiḥah. (Editor)

﴿بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ﴾ (١) الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ (٢) الرَّحْمَنِ
 الرَّحِيمِ (٣) سَتِلِك يَوْمَ الدِّينِ (٤) إِيَّاكَ نَعْبُدُ وَإِيَّاكَ نَسْتَعِينُ (٥) اهْدِنَا الصِّرَاطَ
 الْمُسْتَقِيمَ (٦) صِرَاطَ الَّذِينَ أَنْعَمْتَ عَلَيْهِمْ غَيْرِ الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا الضَّالِّينَ (٧)﴾

(سورة الفاتحة: ١-٧)

﴿In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful. [All] praises and thanks are [due] to Allah, Lord of the worlds, the Beneficent, the Merciful, Owner of the Day of Recompense. You [alone] do we worship, and You [alone] we ask for help. Guide us to the straight path — the path of those on whom You have bestowed Your favour, not of those who have evoked Your anger nor those who go astray.﴾

(Qur'an 1: 1-7)

Soorat al-‘Aşr (103: Time)

1. Wal-‘aşr
2. Innal-insâna la fee khusr
3. Illal-ladheena âmanoo wa ‘amil uş-şâliḥâtî wa tawâşaw bil-ḥaqqi wa tawâşaw biş-şabr

﴿وَالْعَصْرِ (١) إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ (٢) إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ (٣) وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ (٤)﴾

(سورة العصر: ١-٣)

﴿By time, verily a human is in a great state of loss and ruin — except those who believe and do righteous deeds, and enjoin each other to uphold the truth, and enjoin each other to uphold patience and constancy.﴾

(Qur'an 103: 1-3)

Soorat al-Humazah (104: The Scorer)

1. Waylul likulli humazatil-lumazah
2. Alladhee jama‘a mâlaw-wa ‘addadah
3. Yaḥsabu anna mâlahoo akhladah
4. Kallâ layummbadhanna fil-ḥuṭamah

5. Wa mâ adrâka mal-ḥuṭamah
6. Nârullâhil-mooqadah
7. Allatee taṭṭali'u 'alal-af'idah
8. Innahâ 'alayhim mu'sadah
9. Fee 'amadim mumaddadah

﴿وَيْلٌ لِّكُلِّ هُمَزَةٍ لُّمَزَةٍ ۝ (١) الَّذِي جَمَعَ مَالًا وَعَدَّدَهُ. ۝ (٢) يَحْسَبُ أَنَّ مَالَهُ أَخْلَدَهُ. ۝ (٣) كَلَّا لَيُنْبَذَنَّ فِي الْحُطَمَةِ ۝ (٤) وَمَا أَدْرَاكَ مَا الْحُطَمَةُ ۝ (٥) نَارُ اللَّهِ الْمَوْقَدَةُ ۝ (٦) الَّتِي تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى الْآفَاقَةِ ۝ (٧) إِنَّهَا عَلَيْهِمْ مُّوَسَدَةٌ ۝ (٨) فِي عَمَدٍ مُّمَدَّدَةٍ ۝ (٩)﴾
(سورة الهُمزة: ١-٩)

﴿Woe to every scorner and mocker who collects wealth and counts it. He thinks that his wealth will make him immortal. No! He will surely be thrown into the crusher. What can make you know what the crusher is? It is the fire of Allah, [eternally] fuelled, which mounts directed at the hearts. Indeed, it will be closed down upon them in extended columns.﴾
(Qur'an 104: 1-9)

Soorat al-Feel (105: The Elephant)

1. Alam tara kayfa fa'ala rabbuka bi aşhâb il-feel
2. Alam yaj'al kaydahum fee taḍleel
3. Wa arsala 'alayhim ṭayran abâbeel
4. Tarmeehim biḥijâratim min sijjeel
5. Faja'alalum ka'aşfim ma'kool

﴿أَلَمْ تَرَ كَيْفَ فَعَلَ رَبُّكَ بِأَصْحَابِ الْفِيلِ ۝ (١) أَلَمْ يَجْعَلْ كَيْدَهُمْ فِي تَضْلِيلٍ ۝ (٢) وَأَرْسَلَ عَلَيْهِمْ طَيْرًا أَبَابِيلَ ۝ (٣) تَرْمِيهِمْ بِحِجَارَةٍ مِّن سِجِّيلٍ ۝ (٤) فَجَعَلَهُمْ كَعَصْفٍ مَّأْكُولٍ ۝ (٥)﴾
(سورة الفيل: ١-٥)

﴿Have you not considered [O Muhammad] how your Lord dealt with the companions of the elephant? Did He not make their plan into misguidance? He sent against them birds in flocks, striking them with stones of hard clay, and He made them like eaten straw.﴾
(*Qur'an* 105: 1-5)

Soorat Quraysh (106: Quraysh)

1. Li-eelâfi Quraysh
2. Eelâfihim riĥlat ash-shitâ'i waṣ-ṣayf
3. Fal ya'budoo rabba ĥâdhal-bayt
4. Alladhee aţ'amahum min joo'iw wa âmanahum min khawf

﴿لَا يَلْفُ قُرَيْشٍ ۝١ إِلَّا فِيهِمْ رِحْلَةُ الشِّتَاءِ وَالصَّيْفِ ۝٢ فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَذَا الْبَيْتِ ۝٣ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ ۝٤﴾

(سورة قریش: ۱-۴)

﴿For the accustomed security of the Quraysh, their accustomed security [in] the caravan of winter and summer. Let them worship the Lord of this House [the Kaaba], Who has fed them [saving them] from hunger and made them safe from fear.﴾

(*Qur'an* 106: 1-4)

Soorat al-Mâ'oon (107: Assistance)

1. Ara'ayt alladhee yukadh-dhibu bid-deen
2. Fa dhâlik alladhee yadu'ul yateem
3. Wa lâ yaĥuḍḍu 'alâ ṭa'âm il-miskeen
4. Fawaylu lil-muṣallee
5. Alladheena hum 'an ṣalâtihim sâhoon
6. Alladheena hum yurâ'oon
7. Wa yamna'oon al-mâ'oon

﴿أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالذِّينِ ﴿١﴾ فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ أَيْتِمَ ﴿٢﴾ وَلَا
يَحْضُ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمِسْكِينِ ﴿٣﴾ فَوَيْلٌ لِلْمُصَلِّينَ ﴿٤﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ
سَاهُونَ ﴿٥﴾ الَّذِينَ هُمْ يُرَاءُونَ ﴿٦﴾ وَيَمْنَعُونَ الْمَاعُونَ ﴿٧﴾﴾

(سورة الماعون: ١-٧)

«Have you seen the one who denies the recompense? For that is the one who drives away the orphan and does not encourage the feeding of the poor. So woe to those who pray [but] who are heedless of their prayer — those who make show [of their deeds] and withhold [simple] assistance.» (Qur'an 107: 1-7)

Soorat al-Kawthar (108: The Bounty)

1. Innâ a'taynâ kal-Kawthar
2. Faṣalli li-rabbika wanḥar
3. Inna shâni'aka huwal-abtar

﴿إِنَّا أَعْطَيْنَاكَ الْكَوْثَرَ ﴿١﴾ فَصَلِّ لِرَبِّكَ وَانْحَرْ ﴿٢﴾ إِنَّ شَانِئَكَ هُوَ
الْأَبْتَرُ ﴿٣﴾﴾

(سورة الكوثر: ١-٣)

«Indeed, We have granted you [O Muhammad] al-Kawthar.¹⁴⁴ So pray to your Lord and sacrifice. Indeed, your enemy is the one cut off.» (Qur'an 108: 1-3)

Soorat al-Kâfiroon (109: The Disbelievers)

1. Qul yâ ayyu hal-kâfiroon
2. Lâ a'budu mâ ta'budoon
3. Wa lâ antum 'âbidoona mâ a'bud
4. Wa lâ anâ 'âbidum mâ 'abattum
5. Wa lâ antum 'âbidoona mâ a'bud

¹⁴⁴ Al-Kawthar is also the name of a river in paradise, the banks of which are made of pearls.

6. Lakum deenukum wa-liya deen

﴿قُلْ يٰٓأَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ ﴿١﴾ لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ ﴿٢﴾ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عٰبِدُونَ مَا ﴿٣﴾ أَعْبُدُ ﴿٤﴾ وَلَا أَنَا عٰبِدُ مَا عٰبِدْتُمْ ﴿٥﴾ وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عٰبِدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ ﴿٦﴾ لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ ﴿٦﴾﴾

(سورة الكافرون: ١-٦)

﴿Say: O disbelievers! I do not worship what you worship, and you are not worshippers of what I worship. I will not be a worshipper of what you worship, nor will you be worshippers of what I worship. For you is your religion, and for me is my religion.﴾

(Qur'an 109: 1-6)

Soorat an-Naşr (110: Victory)

1. Idhâ jâ'a naşrullâhi wal-fath
2. Wa ra'aytan nâsa yadkhuloona fee deen illâhi afwâjâ
3. Fasabbih bihamdi rabbika wastaghfirhu innahu kâna tawwâbâ

﴿إِذَا جَاءَ نَصْرُ اللَّهِ وَالْفَتْحُ ﴿١﴾ وَرَأَيْتَ النَّاسَ يَدْخُلُونَ فِي دِينِ اللَّهِ أَفْوَاجًا ﴿٢﴾ فَسَبِّحْ بِحَمْدِ رَبِّكَ وَاسْتَغْفِرْهُ إِنَّهُ كَانَ تَوَّابًا ﴿٣﴾﴾

(سورة النصر: ١-٣)

﴿When the victory of Allah has come and the conquest [of Makkah], and you see the people entering into the religion of Allah in multitudes, then exalt [Him] with praise of your Lord and ask forgiveness of Him. Indeed, He is ever accepting of repentance.﴾

(Qur'an 110: 1-3)

Soorat al-Masad (111: Fibre)

1. Tabbat yadâ Abi Lahabiw wa tabb
2. Mâ aghnâ 'anhu mâluhu wa mâ kasab
3. Sayaşlâ nâran dhâta lahab
4. Wamra'atuhu ḥammâ latal-ḥaṭab

5. Fee jeedihâ ḥablum mim-masad

﴿تَبَّتْ يَدَا أَبِي لَهَبٍ وَتَبَّ ۝١ مَا أَغْنَىٰ عَنْهُ مَالُهُ وَمَا كَسَبَ ۝٢ سَيَصْلَىٰ نَارًا ذَاتَ لَهَبٍ ۝٣ وَامْرَأَتُهُ حَمَّالَةَ الْحَطَبِ ۝٤ فِي جِيدِهَا حَبْلٌ مِّن مَّسَدٍ ۝٥﴾
 (سورة المسد: ١-٥)

«May the hands of Abu Lahab be ruined, and ruined is he. His wealth will not avail him or that which he gained. He will burn in a fire of [blazing] flame, and his wife, the carrier of firewood — around her neck is a rope of [twisted] fibre.» (Qur'an 111: 1-5)

Soorat al-Ikhlâṣ (112: Purity, Sincerity)

1. Qul huwallâhu aḥad
2. Allâhuṣ-Ṣamad
3. Lam yalid wa lam yoolad
4. Wa lam yakullahu kufuwan aḥad

﴿قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ ۝١ اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ۝٢ لَمْ يَكِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ۝٣ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ۝٤﴾
 (سورة الإخلاص: ١-٤)

«Say: He is Allah, the One. Allah, the Eternal Refuge. He neither begets nor is born, nor is there to Him any equivalent.»

(Qur'an 112: 1-4)

Soorat al-Falaq (113: Daybreak)

1. Qul a'oodhu bi rabbil-falaq
2. Min sharri mâ khalaq
3. Wa min sharri ghâsiqin idhâ waqab
4. Wa min sharrin-nâffâthâti fil-'uqad
5. Wa min sharri ḥâsidin idhâ ḥasad

﴿قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ ﴿١﴾ مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ ﴿٢﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ ﴿٣﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ ﴿٤﴾ وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ ﴿٥﴾﴾
 (سورة الفلق: ١-٥)

﴿Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of daybreak from the evil of that which He created, and from the evil of darkness when it settles, and from the evil of the blowers in knots, and from the evil of an envier when he envies.﴾
 (Qur'an 113: 1-5)

Soorat an-Nâs (114: Humankind)

1. Qul a'oodhu bi rabb-in-nâs
2. Malik in-nâs
3. Ilâhin-nâs
4. Min sharril-waswâs il-khannâs
5. Alladhee yuwaswisu fee sudoorin-nâs
6. Min al-jinnati wan-nâs

﴿قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ ﴿١﴾ مَلِكِ النَّاسِ ﴿٢﴾ إِلَهِ النَّاسِ ﴿٣﴾ مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ ﴿٤﴾ الَّذِي يُوَسْوِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ ﴿٥﴾ مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ ﴿٦﴾﴾
 (سورة الناس: ١-٦)

﴿Say: I seek refuge in the Lord of humankind, the Sovereign of humankind, the God of humankind; from the evil of the retreating whisperer, who whispers into the breasts of humankind; from among the jinn and humankind.﴾
 (Qur'an 114: 1-6)

Appendix 11:

Resources for women on the topics of purification and prayer

Websites

There are quite a few websites which disseminate authentic information regarding specific matters related to women and their prayers. These include not just the prayer itself but also such issues as cleanliness, purity, and attire. Some of these are as follows:

A woman's prayer

<http://www.islam-qa.com/en/cat/59>

The Muslim woman's ritual purity

<http://www.islam-qa.com/en/cat/68>

Rulings on women's prayer and related issues

<http://qa.sunnipath.com/browse.asp?ToDo=browse&id=10&catId=216>

Books

Philips, Abu Ameenah Bilal. *Islamic Rules on Menstruation and Post-Natal Bleeding*. Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2005.

al-Lajna ad-Daima. *Fatâwa: Essential Rulings for Every Muslim Woman*. Translated by Ibn Maqbool Husain. Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2005.

Hakam, Jamila and Nazek Younis. *How Can I Get Closer to Allah? What Every Muslim Woman Needs to Know About Her Menses and After Giving Birth*. Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2008.

Appendix III:

Mandatory Prayers (*Ṣalâh*)

| Arabic prayer name | Prayer times | Units of prayer (repetitions) | Method of recitation | Sunnah units of prayer associated with this mandatory prayer |
|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|--|
| <i>Fajr</i> | Dawn, before sunrise | 2 | audible | 2 before |
| <i><u>Dhuhr</u></i> | Early afternoon | 4 | silent | 4 before, 2 after |
| ' <i>Aṣr</i> | Mid-afternoon | 4 | silent | none |
| <i>Maghrib</i> | Sunset | 3 | audible | 2 after |
| ' <i>Ishâ'</i> | Evening, after nightfall | 4 | audible | 2 after |

Bibliography

- Abu Dâwood, Sulaiman ibn Ash'ath. Sunan Abu Dawood (Arabic-English). Volumes 1 to 5. Translated by Abu Ammar Yasir Qadhi. Riyadh: Darussalam, 2008.
- al-Albâni, Muhammad Nâsir ad-Deen. Aḥkâm al-Janâ'iz. Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islâmi, 1969.
- Ali, Abdullah Yusuf. The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an. Beltsville, MD: Amana Publications, 1993.
- Alkhairo, Wael. Speaking for Change: A Guide to Making Effective Friday Sermons. Beltsville, MD: Amana Publications, 1998.
- al-Awaayishah, Husayn. The Prayer: Its Effect in Increasing Eemaan and Purifying the Soul. Birmingham: Al-Hidaayah Publishing and Distribution Ltd., 1995.
- Bukhari, Muhammad ibn Ismâ'eel. Sahih al-Bukhari (Arabic-English). Volumes 1 to 9. Translated by Muhammad Muhsin Khan. Riyadh: Darussalam, 1997.
- Deedat, Ahmed. "Christian Guests in Your Mosque." Lecture, Jumu'ah Masjid, Durban, South Africa, 1985.
- Haneef, Suzanne. What Everyone Should Know About Islam and Muslims. New Delhi: Adam Publishers and Distributors, 1994.

- Ibn Majah, Muhammad al-Qazwini. *Sunan Ibn Majah* (Arabic-English). Volumes 1 to 5. Translated by Nasiruddin al-Khattab. Riyadh: Darussalam, 2007.
- Ibn al-Qayyim, Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr al-Jawziyah. *Madârij as-Sâlikeen*. Egypt: al-Hay'at al-Miṣriyat al-‘Āmma lil-Kitâb, 1980.
- Ibn Qudâmah, ‘Abdullâh ibn Aḥmad. *Al-Mughni*. Riyadh: Maktabat ar-Riyâḍ al-Ḥadeethah, 1980.
- Iqbal, Muhammad. *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*. London: Oxford University Press, 1934.
- Khan, Muhammad Muhsin and Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al-Hilali. *Interpretation of the Meaning of the Noble Qur'an in the English Language*. Riyadh: Darussalam, 1996.
- al-Munajjid, Muhammad Ṣâlih. *33 Ways of Developing Al-Khushoo': Humility and Devotion in Prayer*. Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2004.
- Muslim, Imam Ibn al-Ḥajjâj. *English Translation of Sahih Muslim*. Volume 1. Translated by Abdul-Hamid Siddiqui. Beirut: Dar al-Arabia, 1972.
- Muslim, Imam Ibn al-Ḥajjâj. *Sahih Muslim* (Arabic-English). Volumes 1 to 7. Translated by Nasiruddin al-Khattab. Riyadh: Darussalam, 2007.
- al-Musnad, Muhammad bin ‘Abdul-‘Aziz. *Fatawa Islamiyah (Islamic Verdicts)*. Volumes 2 and 3. Riyadh: Darussalam, 2010.
- an-Nasai, Aḥmad. *Sunan an-Nasâ'i* (Arabic-English). Volumes 1 to 6. Translated by Nasiruddin al-Khattab. Riyadh: Darussalam, 2007.

- Ondigo, Capt. (Rtd.) Yahya M. A. *Forty Hadiths on Poisonous Social Habits with Short Commentaries*. Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2012.
- _____. *The Seven Conditions of Shahâdah (Testimony of Faith)*. Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2012.
- Philips, Abu Ameenah Bilal. *The Fundamentals of Tawheed*. Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2006.
- _____. *Funeral Rites in Islam*. Sharjah: Dar Al Fatah Printing, Publishing & Distribution Co., 1996.
- _____. *Islamic Studies Book 2*. Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2005.
- _____. *Islamic Studies Book 3*. Riyadh: International Islamic Publishing House, 2005.
- al-Qahtaani, Sa'eed ibn Ali ibn Wahf. *Fortification of the Muslim Through Remembrance and Supplication from the Qur'an and Sunnah*. Jeddah: Dar al-Khair Islamic Book Publisher, 1998.
- al-Qaradawi, Yusuf. *Time in the Life of the Muslim*. Cairo: Islamic Inc. Publishing & Distribution, 1998.
- Quraishy, M. A. *Textbook of Islam Book 2*. Nairobi: The Islamic Foundation, 1987.
- Ridâ, Muhammad Rasheed. *Tafseer al-Qur'ân al-Hakeem*. Beirut: Dâr al-Fikr.
- Saheeh International. *The Qur'an: Arabic Text with Corresponding English Meanings*. Jeddah: Abul-Qasim Publishing House, 1997.
- as-Sallaabee, 'Ali Muhammad. *The Noble Life of the Prophet (peace be upon him)*. Riyadh: Darussalam, 2005.

al-Sawwaf, Shaikh Muhammad Mahmud. *The Muslim Book of Prayer*. Sharjah: Printers & Stationers Industries, n.d.

at-Tirmidhi, Hafiz Abu Eisa. *Jâmi' At-Tirmidhi* (Arabic-English). Volumes 1 to 6. Translated by Abu Khaliyl. Riyadh: Darus-salam, 2007.

Zarabozo, Jamaal al-Din M. *Commentary on the Forty Hadith of Al-Nawawi*. Denver, CO: Al-Basheer Publications and Translations, 1999.

Glossary of Islamic Terms*

| | | |
|---------------------------|--------------|---|
| <i>abu (or abi)</i> | أبو، أبي | father (of) |
| <i>adhân</i> | أذان | the call to prayer |
| <i>alḥamdulillâh</i> | الحمد لله | all praise is for Allah |
| <i>Allâhu akbar</i> | الله أكبر | Allah is the Greatest |
| <i>âmeen</i> | آمين | O Allah, accept our invocation; amen |
| <i>Anṣâr</i> | أنصار | ‘helpers’: the Muslim citizens of Madinah who gave refuge to the Prophet (ﷺ) and the other Muslim emigrants from Makkah |
| <i>‘aṣr</i> | عصر | mid-afternoon; the obligatory prayer at that time |
| <i>as-salâmu ‘alaykum</i> | السلام عليكم | a greeting, which means ‘peace’ |
| <i>astaghfir Allâh</i> | أستغفر الله | I seek Allah’s forgiveness |
| <i>‘awrah</i> | عورة | the part of a person’s body that must be screened from public view; for males it is the area between the navel and the knees, and for females it is |

* The Arabic words are transliterated according to the conventions of the Transliteration Chart found in this book. If a word has become part of the English language (that is, it is found in a dictionary of standard English), that spelling is used in this book and appears first in this Glossary, with the transliterated form in brackets after it.

| | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|--|
| | | everything except the hands and the face |
| <i>banu</i> (or <i>bani</i>) | بنو ، بني | <i>lit.</i> ‘children (of)’; <i>usu.</i> referring to a tribe that claims a common ancestor |
| <i>bismillâh</i> | بسم الله | in the name of Allah |
| <i>Dajjâl</i> | الدجال | the Antichrist (anti-Christ) |
| <i>da‘wah</i> | دعوة | disseminating the teachings of Islam and calling people to accept and embrace Islam |
| <i>dhikr Allâh</i> | ذكر الله | remembrance of Allah; specifically, remembering Allah through praising and supplicating to Him |
| <i>dhuhr</i> | ظهر | afternoon; the obligatory prayer at that time |
| <i>du‘â’</i> | دعاء | supplication; invocation |
| <i>ḍuḥâ’</i> | الضحاء | mid- to late morning; the optional prayer at that time |
| Eid (‘ <i>eed</i>) | عيد | <i>lit.</i> festival; the two celebrations: one at the end of Ramadan (<i>Eid al-Fiṭr</i>) and the other at the culmination of the Hajj (<i>Eid al-Aḍḥâ</i>) |
| <i>fajr</i> | الفجر | dawn; the obligatory prayer at that time |
| <i>fard ‘ayn</i> | فرض عين | an individual obligation |
| <i>fard kifâya</i> | فرض كفاية | a communal obligation; if a part of the Muslim community performs it, the rest are absolved from sin |
| <i>farsakh</i> | فرسخ | a unit of measurement representing a distance of 5,541 meters |

| | | |
|------------------------------|--------|---|
| <i>gheerah</i> | غيرة | feeling of jealousy, self-respect, fury, and anger when one's honour and prestige is injured or challenged with regard to women and other issues |
| <i>ghusl</i> | غسل | ritual shower necessary after a major impurity; for example, after sexual intercourse or at the end of the menstrual period |
| Hadith (<i>ḥadeeth</i>) | حديث | the collected statements and actions of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that with the Qur'an form the basis of Islamic law |
| hadith (<i>ḥadeeth</i>) | حديث | a statement or action of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that was remembered and recorded by his Companions and followers |
| Hajj (<i>hajj</i>) | حج | the major pilgrimage to the Sacred Mosque, site of the Kaaba at Makkah, to be undertaken by every able Muslim once in his or her lifetime |
| hijab (<i>ḥijâb</i>) | حجاب | veil ordained by Allah for believing women |
| <i>iftirâsh</i> | إفتراش | a position in which one sits during the prayer; one lays the left foot on its side and sits on it, while making the right foot flexed and perpendicular to the ground, heel up, toes flat on the ground, tips pointing to the qibla |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|--|
| imam | امام | leader of congregational prayers; often also a community leader |
| inshallah (<i>in shâ'Allah</i>) | إن شاء الله | God willing |
| <i>iqâmah</i> | إقامة | the call to rise for prayer, given when the prayer is about to begin |
| ' <i>ishâ</i> ' | عشاء | evening; the obligatory prayer at that time |
| <i>isrâ'</i> and <i>mi'râj</i> | الإسراء والمعراج | the night journey of the Prophet (ﷺ) from Makkah to Jerusalem and then up to visit heaven |
| <i>istikhârah</i> | استخارة | a prayer by which one seeks guidance from Allah |
| <i>jam ' ta'akhir</i> | جمع تأخير | combining two prayers at the time of the later prayer. The <i>dhuhr</i> prayer is offered just before the ' <i>asr</i> ' prayer at the time that is valid for ' <i>asr</i> ', or the <i>maghrib</i> prayer is offered just before the ' <i>ishâ</i> ' prayer at the time that is valid for ' <i>ishâ</i> '. |
| <i>jam ' taqdeem</i> | جمع تقديم | combining two prayers at the time of the earlier prayer. The <i>dhuhr</i> prayer is offered just before the ' <i>asr</i> ' prayer at the time that is valid for <i>dhuhr</i> , or the <i>maghrib</i> prayer is offered just before the ' <i>ishâ</i> ' prayer at the time that is valid for <i>maghrib</i> . |
| <i>janâbah</i> | جنابة | a state of ritual impurity due to sexual activity or emission |
| <i>jihad (jihâd)</i> | جهاد | struggle or striving (in Allah's cause) |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|--------|--|
| <i>jilbâb</i> | جلباب | a long, loose garment worn over a woman's indoor clothing that covers the whole body, like a full-length coat |
| <i>jinn</i> (sg. <i>jinni</i>) | جن | non-human, rational beings created by Allah from fire, often referred to as 'demons' or 'devils'. They have free will like humans: some are Muslims, others disbelievers; some are obedient to Allah, others disobedient. Satan is a jinni. Some people try to 'foretell' the future by contacting a jinni. Some disobedient jinn mislead people into thinking that they can tell them what will happen in the future, near or far, or that the jinn can provide people with riches or some sort of power. |
| Kaaba (<i>Ka'bah</i>) | الکعبة | the House of Allah in Makkah, originally built by Prophets Abraham and Ishmael, and which Muslims face wherever they pray |
| <i>al-Kawthar</i> | الکوتر | the name of a river in paradise, the banks of which are made of pearls |
| <i>khaṭeeb</i> | خطیب | the imam giving the sermon |
| <i>khimâr</i> | خمار | a scarf or similar head-covering worn by a Muslim woman as part of her hijab |
| <i>khushoo'</i> | خشوع | humility and devotion, especially in the prayer |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---|
| <i>khuṭbah</i> | خطبة | sermon or speech; specifically, the sermon given during the Friday congregational prayer |
| <i>maghrib</i> | مغرب | sunset; the obligatory prayer at that time |
| <i>al-Masjid al-Aqṣâ</i> | المسجد الأقصى | the 'Farthest Mosque', located in Jerusalem and mentioned in the Qur'an (17: 1) |
| <i>al-Masjid al-Ḥarâm</i> | المسجد الحرام | the Sacred Mosque in Makkah where the Kaaba is situated |
| <i>nafl</i> (pl. <i>nawâfil</i>) | نفل | optional acts and deeds which are not obligatory or Sunnah, as per the Sharia |
| prophethood | | The term 'prophethood' is not in the English dictionary, but is an invented term, formed along the pattern of 'childhood' and 'motherhood', as a noun reflecting a particular state of being. It is meant to translate the meaning of the Arabic word <i>nubuwwah</i> , which has no one-word equivalent in English, but which could be translated as meaning 'the state of being a prophet', and is also used to refer to 'all things that have to do with being a prophet'. The term 'prophethood' has since become common in English-language Islamic discourse. |
| <i>qaḍâ'</i> | القضاء | prayer that is performed after its time period has passed; a make-up prayer |

| | | |
|--|------------|--|
| <i>qeerât</i> | قيراط | <i>lit.</i> an amount of gold weighing 3 kg (carat); figuratively, the 'measurement' of a reward from Allah |
| <i>qibla (qiblah)</i> | القبلة | the bearing from the Kaaba to any point on Earth; the direction that all Muslims must face in prayer |
| <i>qiyâm</i> | قيام | standing position in prayer |
| <i>qiyâm ul-layl</i> | قيام الليل | <i>lit.</i> 'standing the night'; getting up to pray supererogatory prayers during the late night and early morning before fajr; see <i>tahajjud</i> |
| <i>Quraysh</i> | قريش | the dominant tribe in Makkah at the time of the Prophet's mission; their society was based on polytheism |
| <i>raka'ah (pl. raka'ât)</i> | ركعة | a unit of the formal prayer (ṣalâh) |
| Ramadan (<i>Ramaḍân</i>) | رمضان | the ninth month in the Islamic calendar; the month of obligatory fasting; the month in which the first verses of the Qur'an were revealed |
| <i>ar-rawâtib</i> | الرواتب | voluntary prayers; they constitute twelve units prayed immediately before and after the five daily obligatory prayers |
| <i>rukoo'</i> | ركوع | the act of bowing (in prayer) |
| <i>sajdah</i> (<i>pl. sujood</i>) | سجدة | an act of prostration (in prayer) |
| <i>ṣalât or ṣalâh</i> | صلاة | formal prayer: a combination of physical postures, recitation and supplication |
| <i>ṣalât ul-'eed</i> | صلاة العيد | Eid prayer |

| | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------|--|
| <i>ṣalât ul-ḥâjah</i> | صلاة الحاجة | prayer for a need |
| <i>ṣalât ul-is-tisqâ'</i> | صلاة الاستسقاء | prayer for rain |
| <i>ṣalât ul-jamâ'ah</i> | صلاة الجماعة | congregational ṣalâh |
| <i>ṣalât ul-janâzah</i> | صلاة الجنازة | funeral prayer |
| <i>ṣalât ul-Jumu'ah</i> | صلاة الجمعة | weekly Friday congregational prayer wherein all the Muslims of a particular area assemble for the Friday sermon that begins a few minutes after midday for thirty to forty minutes, followed by two units of ṣalâh in congregation |
| <i>ṣalât ul-khawf</i> | صلاة الخوف | prayer of fear; it is performed during wars or battles |
| <i>ṣalât ul-khusoof</i> | صلاة الخسوف | the ṣalâh performed during a lunar eclipse |
| <i>ṣalât ul-kusoof</i> | صلاة الكسوف | the ṣalâh performed during the solar eclipse |
| <i>ṣalât ul-musâfir</i> | صلاة المسافر | prayer of a traveller |
| <i>shahâdah</i> | الشهادة | testimony, <i>usu.</i> the statement lâ il-âha illâ Allâh, Muḥammadun rasool Ullâh (There is none worthy of worship other than God [Allah]; Muḥammad is the Messenger of God) |
| Sharia (<i>shari'ah</i>) | شريعة | Islamic law derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah |

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|--|
| <i>Shaykh al-Islâm</i> | الشيخ الاسلام | an honorific title indicating an individual's authority in Islamic issues |
| <i>shirk</i> | الشرك | associating partners with Allah |
| <i>soorah</i> or <i>soorat</i> | سورة | chapter of the Qur'an |
| <i>subhân Allâh</i> | سبحان الله | glory be to Allah |
| <i>Sunnah</i> | سنة | the practice and collected sayings of Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) that together with the Qur'an forms the basis of Islamic law |
| <i>sunnah</i> | سنة | acts that are recommended but not mandatory |
| <i>tahajjud</i> | تهجد | voluntary night prayer offered between 'ishâ' and fajr |
| <i>ṭahârah</i> | الطهارة | state of ritual purification |
| <i>taḥiyât</i> | التحيات | <i>lit.</i> greeting: a formula recited in the sitting position of the prayer that contains words that indicate the glorification of Allah, His eternal existence, His perfection, and His sovereignty |
| <i>takbeer</i> | تكبير | the act of saying <i>Allâhu akbar</i> |
| <i>takbeerât</i> | تكبيرات | the act of repeatedly saying <i>Allâhu akbar</i> and other phrases praising Allah |
| <i>tarâweeh</i> | تراويح | special communal night prayers performed only in Ramadan |

| | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------|---|
| <i>tashahhud</i> | الشَّهَادَة | the testimony that states that there is none worthy of worship other than Allah, He has no partners, and that Muhammad (ﷺ) is His slave and His messenger |
| <i>tasleem</i> | تَسْلِيم | the act of saying <i>as-salâmu 'alay-kum wa rahmatullâh</i> to end the prayer |
| <i>tayammum</i> | تَيَمُّم | dry-earth ablution, performed when no pure water is available |
| Ummah | أُمَّة | community or nation: <i>usu.</i> used to refer to the entire global community of Muslims |
| unseen | | a term used to denote phenomena or aspects that cannot be known using ordinary human faculties |
| <i>witr</i> | وِتْر | <i>lit.</i> an odd number: a single unit of supererogatory prayer, to be prayed any time after the evening (' <i>ishâ</i> ') prayer and before the call for the dawn prayer |
| <i>wuḍoo'</i> | وُضُوء | ablution required before prayer or touching the Qur'an |
| <i>zakât</i> (or <i>zakât</i>) | زَكَاة | obligatory charity: an 'alms tax' on wealth payable by Muslims and to be distributed to other Muslims who qualify as recipients |

Index

A

ablution 33, 43, 49, 58, 67, 68, 89,
90, 91-107, 109, 114, 115,
128, 132, 134, 135, 136,
150, 196, 207, 229, 244,
245, 247, 259, 298
adhân 76, 127, 159-162, 209,
209n101, 221n110, 259,
289. *See also* call to prayer
‘aṣr (prayer) 42, 93, 96, 125, 126,
127, 129-131, 136, 149,
169, 181, 193, 214, 216,
218, 219, 220, 235, 258,
267, 283, 289, 292
‘awrah 117-122, 289

B

barrier 82, 266, 266n138, 267
bowing 32, 43, 49, 150, 171-173,
174, 176, 223, 228, 241,
252-254, 295

C

call to prayer 62, 63, 76, 135, 159-
161, 289
combining prayers 215, 216, 217-
220, 292

D

dhuhr (prayer) 125, 126, 127, 129,
131, 149, 169, 181, 214,
216, 218, 219, 220, 248,
257, 258, 267, 283, 290, 292
dry ablution. *See* *tayammum*
ḍuhâ’ (prayer) 34, 246-247, 290

E

Eid (prayer) 57, 123, 132, 200-
210, 221, 221n110, 229, 295

F

fajr (prayer) 43n15, 62, 63, 64, 68,
71, 78, 110, 125, 126, 127,
128-129, 132, 133, 134,
135, 169, 181, 211, 216,
235, 247, 248, 251, 255,
256, 283, 290, 295, 297
farḍ ‘ayn 202, 290
farḍ kifāya 201, 223, 290

G

ghusl 89, 90, 107, 110, 111, 112-
115, 192, 207, 291

I

- iftirâsh* 181, 291
 imam 20, 26, 29, 60, 61, 62,
 106n37, 155, 169, 190, 192,
 194, 196, 197, 198, 208,
 210, 227, 228, 229, 250,
 253, 254, 255, 258, 259,
 260, 261, 292, 293
 intention 58, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86,
 95, 97, 112, 114, 197, 258
iqâmah 63, 78, 151, 159, 161, 209,
 253, 258, 259, 262, 264,
 292. *See also* call to prayer
 'ishâ' (prayer) 62, 63, 64, 76, 78,
 125, 126, 127, 132-134,
 210, 216, 218, 219, 220,
 250, 256, 257, 283, 292,
 297, 298
istikhârah (prayer) 34, 236-237,
 292

J

- Jam' ta'akhir.* *See* combining
 prayers
Jam' taqdeem. *See* combining
 prayers
janâbah 113, 113n38, 114, 115,
 292

K

- khaṭeeb* 196, 197-200, 293
khushoo' 43, 143-157, 293
khuṭbah 190, 198, 199, 294. *See*
also sermon

M

- maghrib* (prayer) 125, 126, 127,

- 131-132, 136, 181, 188,
 216, 218, 219, 220, 248,
 254, 258, 283, 292, 294
 missed prayer. *See qadâ'*
 mosque, greeting the 190, 248-250

N

- nawâfil* 235, 294. *See also* volun-
 tary prayers

P

- prayers
 congregational. *See ṣalât ul-*
jamâ'ah
 dawn. *See fajr*
 eclipse, lunar. *See ṣalât ul-khu-*
soof
 eclipse, solar. *See ṣalât ul-kusoof*
 Eid. *See* Eid
 evening. *See 'ishâ'*
 fear. *See ṣalât ul-khawf*
 Friday. *See ṣalât ul-Jumu'ah*
 funeral. *See ṣalât ul-janâzah*
 guidance. *See istikhârah*
 make-up. *See qadâ'*
 mid-afternoon. *See 'aṣr*
 mid-morning. *See duḥâ'*
 need. *See ṣalât ul-hâjah*
 night. *See qiyâm ul-layl, tahajjud*
 noon. *See dhuhr*
 odd-numbered. *See witr*
 rain. *See ṣalât ul-istisqâ'*
 Ramadan. *See tarâweeh*
 sunset. *See maghrib*
 traveller. *See ṣalât ul-musâfir*
 pillars 23, 29, 33, 36, 37, 42-43,
 80, 187-188, 266n138
 prostration 32, 62, 117n40, 172,

173, 174, 175-177, 178,
179, 181, 188, 214, 215,
222, 223, 228, 239, 241,
246, 254, 295

Q

qaḍā' 134, 257, 294
qibla 52, 52n24, 93, 139, 141-142,
175, 179, 181, 214, 221,
227, 291, 295
qiyām 164, 211, 222, 251, 295
qiyām ul-layl 34, 71, 295

R

raka'ât. See units of prayer
rukoo' 43, 171-174, 188, 295. See
also bowing

S

ṣalât ul-hâjah 34, 67, 244-246,
296
ṣalât ul-istisqâ' 33, 220-221, 296
ṣalât ul-janâzah 33, 223-234, 296
ṣalât ul-Jumu'ah 33, 39, 57, 112,
132, 189-200, 201, 204,
207, 294, 296
ṣalât ul-khawf 33, 213-215, 296
ṣalât ul-khusoof 221-223, 254, 296
ṣalât ul-kusoof 221-223, 254, 296
ṣalât ul-musâfir 134n46, 215-218,
296
sermon 39, 189, 190, 192, 195,
196, 197, 198, 199, 200,
207, 209, 210, 220, 221,
221n110, 222, 293, 294, 296
Sharia 39, 44-45, 112, 195, 196,
206, 257, 261, 269, 294, 296
stressed sunnah 201, 210

sujood 172, 175-177, 188, 295. See
also prostration

T

tahajjud 33, 71, 238-243, 250,
295, 297
ṭahârah 89-91, 297
taḥiyât 254, 254n132, 297
takbeer 37, 62, 91, 143, 163, 165,
166, 167, 172, 174, 178,
179, 188, 203, 208, 209,
221, 221n110, 222, 227,
228, 229, 230, 231, 234,
253, 270, 297
tarâweeh 33, 57, 210-213, 254,
297
tashahhud 180-184, 188, 230, 254,
298
tasleem 37, 91, 184-187, 188, 215,
228, 230, 240, 254, 256,
258, 270, 298
tayammum 89, 90, 108-112, 229,
270, 298

U

Ummah 30, 46, 99, 212, 219, 271,
298
units of prayer 34, 67, 179,
179n81, 188, 217, 220, 240,
244, 246, 249, 250, 253,
254, 258, 283, 295

W

witr 43, 43n15, 240, 250-251, 298
wuḍoo'. See ablution